

CHRISTS COMMUNION

WITH
His Church Militant.

first preached, and now published for the good of Gods Church in general.

The sixth Edition.

BY
NICHOLAS LOCKYER,
Master of Arts.

CANT. I. 13.

*bundle of Myrrh is my Wel-beloved
unto me, he shall lye all night betwixt
my breasts.*

LONDON,
Printed by S. G. for J. Rothwel, at the
Fountain and Bear, in Goldsmiths-row
in Cheapside, 1656.

William Dan
His Book 174

His Church Militant

His preached, and how pub-
lished for the good of Gods
Church Militant.

The first Edition.

BY
VICTOR LUCYER,
Master of Arts.

CANT. 174.
Printed by J. W. at the
University Press, in the
City of London.

LONDON,
Printed by S. G. for J. Roberts, at the
Mountain and Bear, in Goldsmiths-row
in Church, 1745.

To the Virtuous Lady Aunt,
SUSAN CECIL,

Grace and peace be multiplied by
JESUS CHRIST

Madam,

THe sweet taste I have had of your
Ladyships love to the best things,
hath encouraged me, humbly to pre-
sent this little Tract unto you. What Solo-
mon speaks from experience, that you upon
trial have found true, That the most pro-
mising contents of this life, are vanity
and vexation of spirit. Our wise and
merciful Father doth usually thus imbitter
the sweetest things of this world to us, that
we may the more cordially relish, and fer-
vently seek after that full satisfying, and
everlasting sweetness and comfort, which is
in communion with Christ our heavenly
husband, in whom all fulness of consol-
ation dwells. A drop of this transcendent
sweetnesse, your Ladyship (I hope) shall
be distilled into your soul, by reading of
this little work now come to your hands,

A 2 which

The Epistle Dedicatory.

which like Aqua-viæ, shall cheer and revive your sad spirit, when ready to faint. Fainting persons carry little bottles of reviving liquids, alwaies about them; if your Ladyship shall think fit to make this little Tract your pocket companion, and peruse a little of it still, when you feel soul qualms to seize upon you; you shall find, I trust, through the blessing of Christ, much ease and comfort; and so spend and end your aged daies, in more true solace of heart, than yet you have done your prime daies of flourishing youth. The accomplishing of this, is the sincere and holy aim of your much obliged Nephew, in this his first offering to publique view. Which simple aim, that the Lord may graciously answer to your Ladyships comfort here, and eternal happiness hereafter, I shall still continue my prayer (though here I end my Epistle) that the Lord will still attend to my poor endeavour with his rich blessing to all the partakers hereof, and in special to you.

Your much obliged Nephew

Nicholas Doctyer.



Christian Reader,

Communion with Christ, is our
Chappiness in this World, and in
the World to come : that which makes
every sweet thing sweet, and every sweet
thing sweeter. With this sweet Sub-
ject is this little Tract now come to thy
hand taken up. Poor fallen man is still
complaining of one want or other ; and
when the thing is given which he long-
ed for, yet his soul is as far from con-
tent, as before ; like to a child that cries
for this and that, and yet when he
hath what he cryed for, continues cry-
ing still, and cannot tell well what he
would have. All our want is this, the
want of communion with Christ : this
is the cause of all complaints ; the infe-
licity of the soul, the sum of mans mi-
sery, here and hereafter ; but poor
blind man sees it not, and therefore
complains of twenty things, twenty

To the Reader.

miles a this side his disease; and so spends his dayes in labour and sorrow, and yet loses happiness, both here and hereafter too. A full fruition of Christ, is full felicity: a full fruition of any thing below Christ, without Christ, is but vanity and vexation of spirit. The more then, O fallen man, thou canst get into communion with thy God, the more will thy great losse be repaired, thy complaining soul satisfied, and thy tranquillity settled upon thee again. Hunt not then after riches, honours, pleasures, and such like low delights of the Sons of men, with this deluded mistaken world, which lies in wickedness for felicity is not in these: but study and strive after a neerer communion with Christ: the next way to get more in with him, is the speedy way unto all happiness: so much as thou canst get of his company, so much art thou in Heaven. *How precious are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them? If I should count them, they are more in number than the Sand: when*

away

To the Reader.

*awake, I am still with thee, Psal. 139.
17, 18.*

This is Heaven upon Earth; and that true Nobility and Honour, which we should be all ambitious after; to lose our Spirits in God. What an unspeakable felicity is it, to be still with God in our thoughts? This ennobles the Spirit of man, and makes it a companion to the King of Kings: this gives evenness and steadiness to a mans course; and makes him walk in all the wayes of God blameless: this gives transcendent peace and tranquillity to a mans spirit, and makes him unmoveable in the midst of fears: this gives bread in famin, drink in drought, peace in war, health in sickness, life in death. Devote thy self therefore to Christ, that he may devote himself to thee: and as a poor *medium* of communion make use (if thou please) of this ensuing Treatise. If thou get any good, give glory to God; and make the poor Penman a constant sharer in thy Prayers.

*Thine in Christ,
Theophilus Philanthropus.*

17-61

...in the ...

There is only

Trichilia polyneura



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FINIS.

Christs Communion: with His Church Militant.

John 14. vers 18.

*I will not leave you comfortless; I will
come to you.*

Christ and his Church are dear each to
other; the truth of this is at large ma-
nifest in this Chapter. Christ as a hea-
venly Husband being to leave his
earthly Spouse, to wit, his Church Militant,
and to live with his Father at his right hand
in glory, with his Church Triumphant, endea-
vourerh with various verses of this Chapter,
to comfort the sad spirit of his beloved Spouse,
which he perceived was much dejected. The
Verse which I have chosen to insist on, is one
of them: *I will not leave you comfortless; I will
come to you.* In more words let me repeat this
verse again. *Thou, O my Love, my Dove, my fair-
One, I art sad I see, and disconsolate at my depar-
ture! As a Lilly in the valley; nay, as a Lilly
(indeed) among thorns, I shall leave thee: the
Prince of darkness dwelling in the children of
darkness, will endeavour to devour thee; Sons of
Belial*

Belial will beset thee, persecute and torment thee, as they have done me before thee : but be not at this dismayed, O fairest of women ! dejected, as one without all consolation ; for I will not leave thee comfortless, I will come to thee.

What difference is there between a prison-house and mine own house, if sweet friends continually come to me there ? 'Tis a prison and no better we abide in, whilst we dwell in the body : fetter'd we are with many lusts, and groan we do, under the tyranny and oppression of a body of death ; and O ! wretched men that we are, dwelling in these dungeons of clay, if no friend from Heaven come to us ? 'Tis true, O my Spouse, what thou sayest ; and therefore that thy dwelling in the body may not be comfortless, I will come to thee. *I will not leave thee comfortless, I will come, &c.*

The body is a prison to the soul, and the world is a hell to both. The God of the world is a Devill, and the children of the world Devils, to the Spouse of Christ. The father torments her Spirit ; and the children torment her flesh : neither in body nor soul whilst in this world, can the Spouse of Christ be quiet. We that are thus in here upon earth, shall quickly be comfortless, if no friend from Heaven come to us. *Tis true, O my Spouse : but to prevent this, I will come to thee. From Heaven to Earth (indeed) is a long journey ; but yet this*

not stand on ; rather then thou shalt be left comfortless, in any condition upon earth , I will from Heaven come to thee. Let it be what weather 'twill, at what time 'twill, and be at mid-night thou need'st me, I wil come to thee; *I will not leave you comfortless, I wil come to you.*

Affliction hath made many friends upon earth forsake me, O My Saviour ! wilt not thou my heavenly friend so serve me ? What if the devill cast me into prison ? wilt thou come to me there ? wilt thou visit me when I lye in a nasty room, amongst nasty wretches, that curse and swear, which thou canst not endure to hear ? Yea o fairest of women ! rather than thou shalt be comfortless in such a condition, *I will come to thee.*

Thou wilt come to me, o my Saviour one day : but what if the Devill keep me in such a prison ten days ? a long time ? till the iron enter into my soul ? wilt thou not wax weary at last, and leave comming to me ? No my Love, I am resolved to the contrary. [*I will not*] *leave thee comfortless, [I will] come to thee.*

Why, but what if Satan winnow me as wheat, and cast me into sin, which is more odious to thee than any prison, then any place, or any thing : wilt thou not then leave me off for ever, and never come to me more ? This, o fairest of women, may leave me cease comming to thee for a moment : but no longer : for I am resolved not
to

Christ's communion with

to [leave] thee comfortless in any condition, either of sin or punishment. I will not [leave] thee comfortless [I will] come to thee.

My Text, you see, is Christ's conjugal promise to his Spouse, of all kindreds, during the time of his personal absence. The matter of this promise is consolatory; the form according to which our Saviour expresseth this consolatory language, is first negative; *I will not leave you comfortless*. Secondly, affirmatively; *I will come to you*. These latter words contain the reason of what is delivered in the former. We cannot be comfortless; [because] Christ still comes to us. And thus taking the words, you may read them thus, viz. *I will not leave you comfortless [for] I will come to you*. No condition can be comfortless, if Christ come to us.

I will not leave you comfortless] Οὐκ ἀφαισθῆναι ὑμᾶς ὀρφανούς, *I will not leave you fatherlesse and motherlesse*. *I will not leave you Orphans*, saith the Original, ἀφαισθῆναι ὑμᾶς ὀρφανούς: the word comes from, that is here translated *comfortless*, which signifies to be made fatherless and motherless, which because it is usually a condition very comfortless, therefore is the word thus rendered, ἀφαισθῆναι *comfortless*. Thus the children of Christ shall not be left. They are no Orphans, which have Christ for their Father. They are never totally bereft of all comfort, to whom Christ comes: and thus he will still doe to the Church Militant. Christ will never leave coming from heaven to earth, although it be a ve-

long journey, as long as he hath any one child upon earth. *I will not leave you comfortless.*

I will come to you] *Ἐρχομαι πρὸς ὑμᾶς*, I return to you, saith the Original; spoken in the Present tense, and not in the Future *I will*] *re-*
turn to you, as we have it translated. *Ac si dice-*
ret Christus (saith one) *se licet nondum prof-*
ectum, jam esse in reditu; As if Christ had said,
although I am not yet gone from you, yet I am
returned to you. Christ though not actually in
person departed, yet was ready in Spirit to be
present with his Spouse to the end of the
world.

Thus having paraphrastically gone over these
words, I will put the plain meaning of them
into this Thesis in Divinity, That the Church of
Christ Militant shall not be left comfortless, be-
cause Christ will come to her. Or thus, No child
of Christ upon earth shall be left comfortless; for
Christ will come to him. What Christ spake at
his departure to his Disciples was not for them
only, but for the comfort of all his people to
the end of the world. In his Disciples he spake
that to all his children, that are, or ever shall
be upon the face of the earth, *I will not leave*
you comfortless, I will come to you.

This comfortable doctrine, that I may fully
and methodically handle, I will lay open unto
you these four things: First, that Christ doth
come to his children upon earth. Secondly,
how Christ doth come to his children upon
earth. Thirdly, when Christ doth come to his
child.

children upon earth. Lastly, why Christ will take so much pains, as to come to his children on earth? I begin with the first of these, to wit, that Christ doth come to his Church and children upon earth. The truth of this is evident by our Saviours own language, and by every godly mans experience.

Our Saviour, not only in my Text, but in many other places promised to come to his Church Militant, and therefore surely he doth come to his people on earth: for Christ is God, and God cannot lye, nor repent. What Christ hath said he will do, that he will faithfully perform to a tittle: for *saith the Apostle. Go therefore and teach all Nations, teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo I am with you always, even to the end of the world.* men, Matth. 28. 19, 20. This place sheweth plainly, that Christ doth come to his children upon earth; and that he will do so to the end of the world. For Ministers (all men) to walk faithfully in their place, teaching their flock to observe [all] things that Christ hath given them in charge, will cost them hot water: especially living in corrupt places. This our Saviour tenderly considered: and therefore that his Disciples might not be disheartned, he assures them of his company unto the last, to support and comfort them. *Lo I am with you to the end*

the world; Christ by his phrase of speech doth
 hint us, that what he then spake should
 reach further than unto those to whom then
 he appeared: namely, to all Ministers & people
 to the end of the world, that shall faithfull dis-
 charge their places and callings to his honour:

I might here tell you, that not onely Christs
 word, but also Christs name sets forth the
 truth of this, that Christ is with his Church
 Militant, and so consequently, that he doth
 come to her. He was called *Emanuel*, which
 being interpreted, is *God with us*? *Mat. 1.23.*
 Which name was not only to note Christ, as
 then corporally present with his Church: but
 to note Christ as one having actually assumed
 our nature, and so to be more gloriously pre-
 sent with his Church to the end of the world.
 than ever after *Adams* fall. And as she
 said of her husband, *as his name is, so is he*;
Nabal is his name, and folly is with him: so
 may the Spouse speak of her Husband Christ;
 as his name is, so is he. *Emanuel* is his name,
 which signifies *God with us*, and so indeed is
 Christ. He is continually with us. What
 David said of himself, in respect of Christ; that
 may we truly say of Christ, in respect of us.
Nevertheless (saith he) I am continually with
thee, thou hast holden me by my right band.
 Though Christ dwell in Heaven, and we on
 the earth; yet nevertheless he is contrivally com-
 ming to us, and abiding with us.

The

The godly have, and do find the truth of this by blessed experience, which is the second thing; and that which I rather insist on for the confirmation of the truth in hand; because experience there is no disputation. Peter found the truth of this, that Christ comes to his children upon earth, that their condition may not be comfortless; *Herod cast Peter in prison, and thought to have made him comfortless; but Christ came to him, as you may see. And behold (saith the Text) the Angell of the LORD came upon him, and a Light shined in the prison; and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly: and he cast off his chains. The Jews by a storm of stones thought to have made Stephen comfortless; but Christs coming to him prevented it. Christ so gloriously came to him in that deadly storm, that he found more comfort (I believe) than ever he did before in his life: for he looked up stedfastly into Heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God: he saw the Heavens opened ready to receive him, which transcendently revived him: which glorious vision he could never have seen, had not Christ come to him. Paul likewise found the truth of this point, when he had left Athens and came to preach to the Gentiles at Corinth. He was very fearfull what success he should find in his Ministry amongst the barbarous Gentiles. Now our tender Saviour, that*

might not be overborn with fear, and made heartless and comfortless, graciously comes to him in a vision, as you may read, *Then spake the Lord to Paul by night in a vision; Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace; for I am with thee; for I have much people in this City.* Thus at another time Christ came to Paul, that he might not be left comfortless, when he was pleading his cause before Ananias, and like to be pulled in pieces. And the night following (said the Text) the Lord stood by him, and said, *Be of good cheer Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou also bear witness at Rome.* At another time, *Acts 23. 11.* Paul and Silas together had experience of this truth, that Christ comes to his Church militant. As they were pouring out their souls together in prayer, Christ wonderfully came to them: he came in an Earthquake, and made the foundations of the prison shake, and so opened all the prison doors, and loosed every prisoners bonds. Comfortable was Christs coming to Paul and Silas, but terrible to the Goaler; for he seeing in what manner Christ broke in & rescued his servants, would have killed himself; but Christ came graciously to his soul also, and rescued him out of the hands of the Devill. Happy was it for this man; that Christ did finish two works in one journey; to wit, come to Paul and Silas, and deliver their bodies out of prison; and with all come to their Goaler, and deliver his soul out

out of prison too. In an Earth-quake came both to prisoners and Gaoler : for the Gaoler came trembling to the Prisoners of hope, as a man in despair ; and fell down, saith the Text, before Paul and Silas. 'Tis no matter how Christ come to us, so he comfort us before he leave us. Thus I have shewed to you , that Christ doth come to his Church Militant.

The second thing that I am to shew you for the opening of the point ; is, how Christ doth come to his Church Militant. To this I will answer, First, more generally and briefly : Secondly, more particularly and fully. More generally and briefly, I answer thus. Christ visits his Church Militant, as David visited and comforted Hanan ; to wit, mediately by his spirit, *And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another comforter, that he may abide with you for ever ; even the [Spirit of truth,] &c.* Joh. 14. 16, 17. Peter found the truth of this , that Christ by his Spirit comes now to his Church Militant. While Peter thought on the vision, [the Spirit] said unto him, behold three men seek thee,

But in the second place, that I may more particularly and fully answer to this question to wit, how Christ doth come to his Church Militant, to comfort her in all conditions, will lay before you the generall conditions of mankind : and shew you how Christ by his Spirit as a Comforter, comes to us in the

both the generall conditions of mankind are two,
prosperity and adversity.

Prosperity would soon bring the souls
of Gods people to a comfortless condition,
did not Christ by his Spirit come to them.
Satan, that evill spirit is so busie, comming to
the children of God, when in prosperity,
that did not Christ also come to them by
his Almighty spirit, to quence all his fie-
ry darts, their souls would soon be com-
fortless, the Lord knows. When *Peter* was
warm in the High Priests Hall, then
the devill by a damsell came to him, and
so far he prevail'd on him, that had not
Christ lookt back upon him, and by his Spi-
rit come to him, he had been in a comfort-
less condition indeed. And thus would the
condition of good men now be, which are
warm in their nests with outward things,
did not Christ come to them: when the Sons
of God be honourable, and great amongst
the Sonnes of men, as *David* and *Solomon*,
Job, *Jacob*, and *Abraham* were; then the
devill in point of policy, though not out of
love, visits them often; and by often com-
ming to them then, draws their precious
souls into many sins, as pride, ambition,
police, sensuality, and the like; which like
worms, quickly fret and eat out all divine
consolation in the soul, and leave it like the
redigall feeding upon huskes; solacing
it with no other joy and content, then
what

what the bare creature dipt in sin will afford the sense; which, you must needs say, is of a comfortless conditions the most and worst comfortless. Now that these may not be left in this comfortless state, to perish eternally, Christ by his Spirit thus comes to them. First in a sweet still voyce behinde them, as the Prophet speaks, saying, sometimes in the midst of their sensuality: This is not the way of eternall joy: no, this is the way, O sensual soul, walk in it.

This still voyce strikes a damp in the merry sensuall soul of a Christian, and makes his heart in the midst of vain laughter, sad. This be not prevalent enough to turn him, but on again he will in his sinfull way; then Christ comes with a witness, in thunder and lightning, to convince and sting the conscience, as he did to the Israelites, to bring them to see their wickedness in choosing King; untill God thundered and lightened from Heaven fearfully, they said not to him, their rejecting God as their King, but went on strongly and unaffectedly in their way. And just thus oft times it is with many of the Sons of God in prosperity: the still voyce of Christ sweetly suggesting, and mildly checking for sin, is not strong enough to stop or turn them, untill the Angel of the covenant come down into the conscience, and stand with a flaming sword, threatening nothing but Hell and Death, if they make on a step

ther, they stop nor turn not; which though not Christs naturall carriage to his children, yet he will in tender love deny himself thus far, as to put on an affrighting Vizzard upon his smiling countenance, and come terribly, & save violently, by plucking his Children out of the fire, rather than he will leave any of his so comfortlesse, as to perish remedlesse. Christ will speak out and speak plain, as he did to *David* by *Nathan*, when a still voyce, and secret silent hints and becks will not do, he will come and lay his mouth to a mans ear, and cry aloud, when he perceives that the pleasure or profit of sin hath made him very deaf: he will never leave crying and calling, striking and knocking, till he hath made the deaf Soul hear, and humble himself with *Peter* and *David*, and then he pulls of the terrible Vizzard from his countenance, and looks upon the mourning penitent with a countenance like *Lebanon*, and his lips drop sweet smelling myrrh, into his broken spirit: and so is not left comfortlesse according to Christs promise, *I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you.*

But suppose Satan should not be busie, comming to the sonnes of God in prosperity; yet would worldly prosperity be a comfortlesse condition, should not Christ by his Spirit come to them. Riches, and Honours, together with all other delights of the sonnes of men; they are as the white of an Egge,

B

things

things without savour, unlesse Christ come along with them to us : they tire and weary, prick, distract and vex a man : they rob him of his sleep, and many times of his wits, nay of his precious life : they drown mens souls in Pride, Voluptuousnesse, Secrecy, and so set them in the next way to Hell. This snare waites at every ungodly mans table, which makes prosperity to him comfortlesse. This snare, that it may not catch the godly, Christ comes to them by his Spirit, and sanctifies prosperity to them : He teaches them how to abound ; that is, how so to use the creature, as to enjoy service & comfort from it : and to bring honour and glory by it.

The creature is empty of what it promiseeth and enticing with what it hath : and this makes prosperity to every carnall man, a comfortlesse condition. Now to take of both these, Christ comes to his Children which enjoy the creature, plenteously : he comes in the creature, and so cures the emptinesse of it : that is, by his blessing he makes it satisfiable and contentfull to the enjoyer, which it is not of it self. this is the peculiar gain that attends the godly : Christ comes in the creature to them, and so cures the emptinesse of it, and puts such a supernatural vertue and sweetnesse in it, that they are therewith contented. And as Christ comes [in] the creature to cure the emptinesse of it, so he comes [with] the creature, to cure

the enticing of it. He doth by the creature lead the souls of his Children to the Creator: by the sweet of the one, he lifts up their souls to heaven, to admire the sweetnesse of the other: so that, that which others are enticed and besotted with, and rest in, that they take wing from to flee to heaven, whence comes every good and perfect gift, which is that indeed that makes prosperity a comfortable condition; which otherwise is comfortlesse enough, the Lord knows.

Secondly, adversity would be a comfortlesse condition to the godly, if Christ by his Spirit did not come to them: This I suppose none will deny; For no affliction in it self is comfortable or joyfull, but comfortlesse, if Christ by his Spirit do not come to us. Corporall affliction is a comfortlesse condition, unlesse Christ come to us, and be our Physician. Spirituall affliction is a more comfortlesse condition, if Christ do not come to us.

Here these two questions are necessary to be answered: First, how doth Christ come to us in corporall affliction? Secondly, how doth Christ come to us in Spirituall affliction? To these questions both together, I thus answer: Christ the Physician of soul and body, comes to both with comfort in one way; and that is by helping the soul to apply the promises of God, which are so comfortable to his distresse. If a Child of God be sad and sorrowfull, because of corporall affliction,

on, Christ comes to him by his Spirit, with this comfortable language, *I am all-sufficient*. Christ by his Spirit, spreads abroad this Cardinal promise before the sad soules, and shew him what a depth of mercy is folded up in it. There is a sufficiency of wisdom in me to find out wayes and meanes to deliver thee, though never so low brought. There is likewise a sufficiency of power, to prosecute right meanes to accomplish their right end. Nay, there is a sufficiency in me to work about good for thee, O sad soule, without meanes.

There's a sufficiency of Affection and will, to declare power and wisdom, with every attribute else, for thy good. If for this application and amplification of a generall promise, the soule still droop under some corporall calamity, Christ doth thus in such a soule, as *Jacobs* Sons and Daughters did for him, *They rose up* (saith the Text) *and comforted him*, Gen. 37. 35. So Christ by his Spirit, after a lively manner indeed, rises in such a soule to comfort him: and now leads this mourning Christian to some particular promise; that is, such a promise speaks not of deliverance in generall, but of deliverance in paticular, out of this or that kind of distresse, which he growes under. As, to give you an instance, suppose a Christian be sad and take thought as Christ saith, *What he shall eat, and what he shall drinke, and wherewithall he shall be clothed*.

cloathed: then the Comforter comes with this particular promise, which speaks of deliverance out of this particular distresse. First, seek the kingdome of God and his righteousness: and all these things shall be added unto you: take therefore no thought for to morrow, for to morrow shall take thought for the things of it self, Matth. 6. 33. 34. If yet for all this, the spirit of a Christian still complain, as one fearing he shall want daily bread for him and his; then the Comforter comes, and perswades the soul to rest quietly upon the promise of God. He speaks now to the complaining Christian, as the Levites father in law did to him, Comfort thy self, I pray thee, with a morsell of bread, Judges 19. Comfort thy self, O mourning soul, I pray thee, with this particular promise, which is but a morsell of that bread, which came down from heaven, one of the least favours that Christ hath procured for thee, to wit, a right and interest in the creature: with this perswasive language, doth Christ follow the complaining soul, untill he hath perswaded him to his own mercy; and so he keeps his Children in poverty, from being comfortlesse.

As Christ in Corporall Afflictions comes to his Children, and keeps them from being comfortlesse; so likewise he comes to them in Spirituall Afflictions, that they may not be comfortlesse. If a Child of God be sad and sorrowfull, because of this or that strong

temptation; the Comforter then comes to him with this sweet language, *My grace is sufficient for thee.* Thou prayest, and Satan tempts thee; thou doest fast and pray, and yet Satan and thy lusts are more violent upon thee; thou doest all this with bitter tears, and Satan is the more bitterly bent against thee; and thou art spoiled every moment. By this, O winnowed soul! Christ would shew thee, that thou wilt be comfortlesse, in the midst of all thy sore soul labour, unlesse he come to thee. *This same shall comfort us, concerning the work and toyle of our hands;* said Lamech of Noah, so may we say of Christ; this same must comfort us concerning the labour and toyle of our soul with any temptation: or else we shall be comfortlesse, though we labour never so much. And this Christ doth, and will do, *will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you.*

It a Christian lye languishing because Satans prevailing upon him by temptation, that we may not be comfortlesse in this condition; Christ by his Spirit comes to him; and shewes him the fountain of his blood, how deep it is, and how free it is. How deep it is, that it will drown all sinne; Sinnes after conversion, as well as before: sinnes often repeated, as well as sinnes once committed. And then he shewes the wounded soul, how free this fountain is, for any that hunger and thirst for it, for any that are weary and heavy laden.

laden, 1 John 17. and desire to be eased by it; and so by degrees draws the wounded soul, to wash his wounds in it by faith, and so Christ heals and comforts him. As the brethren of *Ephraim* comforted him, when he mourned because the men of *Gath* had slain his son, 1 *Chro.* 7. 21. So Christ comes to us, and comforts us, when the Devill by his temptations had almost slain our souls, he like a good Samaritan, poures in oyle and wine into our wounds, and cures us. Though Satan passe by, and his limmes passe by, and leave us comfortlesse in the day of wounds and bleeding, yet Christ cannot, so full of bowels is he; nor will not: *I will not leave you comfortlesse, &c.*

If a Christian lie languishing, because of often and frequent relapses, after promises and purposes to do better; If this Christian in the anguish of his spirit speak to every godly friend, as the prophet did to his, *Therefore said I, look away from me, I will weep bitterly; labour not to comfort me, because of the spoyling of the daughter of my people,* Isa. 22. 4. Look away from me, O yee my Christian friends! yea, and you, my faithfull Minister; for I will weep bitterly; labour not to comfort me, because of the spoyling of my soul, by so often sinning, against vows and promises, favours and blessings: Christ comes to this soul, and will not leave him comfortlesse in this condition, (though

it be indeed a very desperate condition.

The Comforter usually takes this course, with this comfortlesse soul, to pour in some Oyle into his deep wounds: he reasoneth with him from the mercy of man, to the mercy of God; from a drop, to the Ocean; and it may be, fastens upon his own language once delivered to *Peter*. *Peter came to our Saviour and said, Lord, how oft shall my Brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee untill seven times but untill seventy times seven, Marhew 18. 21, 22.* From his speech, the Comforter thus reasoneth with this sad and sore wounded soul, viz. If Christ would have *Peter*, a sinfull man, shew so much mercy to one, so often offending him; surely Christ, a holy God, and infinite in love, is ready to shew much more compassion himself, to those that are penitent, though they have sinned times without number against him. Thus the Comforter leads this desperate Christian, as a weak wounded man by the hand, from the mercy of man to the mercy of God; and enables him this way, after some space of time, to take in comfort: for Christ is resolved, he will not leave this Christian comfortlesse. Christ will never leave comming to this comfortlesse soul, with this speech of his to *Peter*, and to others of like nature (as Christ is well furnisht for a Comforter) untill he hath brought

brought him to drink willingly (for Christ forceth no Physick upon any Patient) of the cup of consolation more or lesse; and the longer sick soules turn away their heads from this cup, the more (many times) he perswades them to drink at last.

If Christ *tentandi gratia*, for triall sake, hide himself from a Christian, and so set him a mourning; I shew you by and by, how he comes to him. This is a condition (though of all deserted conditions, the best) which will make a christian heart comfortless indeed. *Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled*, Psalm 30. 7. Gods hiding his face though but for trials sake, will so trouble a Christian, that he will quickly be a burthen to himself, and fear round about, as 'tis said of *Psalm*. 'Twill make him weary of the night, and weary of the day; weary of his own house, and weary of Gods house, weary of mirth, and account it madnesse, weary of Riches, Honours, yea life it self, and wish for death. O that I might have my request, and that God would grant me the thing that I long for, even that it would please God to destroy me, that he would let his hand loose and cut me off; then should I yet have comfort: then should I see the face of God, which I long like Moses to see; then would he lift up the light of his loving countenance, and cause his face to shine gloriously upon me; whereas now I walk in the valley and shadow of death; dark

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daies are all that go over my head; the glorious Sonne of righteousness. *Es. 60.* not upon my soul, from morning to night. To this sad soul thus bemoaning himself for want of his beloved, Christ his well beloved thus comfortably comes. There hath no temptation taken hold of thee yet, O mourning soul, but that which is common to man: and be assured of this; that God is faithful by whom thou art tempted, and will not try thee above that which thou art able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that thou mayst be able to bear it, *1 Cor. 12. 15.* For a moment, O fairest of Woman, I saw just cause to hide my face from thee, to try the truth of thy love to me: but know, that with everlasting kindnesse will I have mercy on thee. Thy dulnesse also in my service, and thy low prizing my company, did some thing trouble me; but know, that the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindnesse shall never depart from thee: for this is as the waters of Noah unto me; as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I will not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee. O thou afflicted, and tossed with tempest, and not comforted; behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with Saphires, and I will make thy windows of Agats, and thy gates of Carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant Saphires, *Isa. 45. 8. 9.* Out of this sweet language

language of the Prophet to the naturall
 branch ~~by~~ comfortor will fetch such pre-
 cious Water ~~of life~~, to revive his diserted
 soul: with the kisses of his lips will he
 so comfort him, that he shall be constraigned
 to say with David; *Thou which hast shewed*
me great troubles, hast quickened me again, and
hast brought me up again from the depths of the
earth; thou hast increased my joy, and comforted
me on every side, Psal. 71. 6. I could hither-
 to, O my God, see thy baek-parts, some
 sad attribures of power and justice, which
 did terrifie my soul to look on; but now, now
 I see thy glory, thou hast caused it gloriously
 to passe by me: nay, to shine upon me:
 I see thy face like Lebanon, comely as the Ce-
 dars; and herewith is my longing soul satisfi-
 ed, as with marrow and fatnesse. *This is*
my comfort, in mine affliction; for thy Spirit O
Christ, by thy word hath revived me. So that this
 soul, though very sorrowfull, yet is not left
 comfortless neither. Thus have I answered the
 second Quæry, to wit, how Christ comes to us.

The third thing that I am to shew you, is,
 When Christ comes to us. *I will not leave you*
comfortlesse, I will come to you. But when, O
 my Saviour, wilt thou come to us? To this
 I answer more generally, than more
 particularly and determinately. More ge-
 nerally and briefly, I answer thus. Christ is
 already come, and is present with his Church
 Militant, and will be to the end of the world,

as hath been already proved. *I am come into my garden, my Sister, my Spouse, I have gathered my Myrrh with my Spice; I have eaten my honey-comb with my honey: I have drunk my Wine with my Milk,* Cant. 5.1. Christ we see by this sweet language, is come, and is with us already, *I am come, &c.*

But when will he come to me in particular as a Comforter? This is the question. To this I answer, first negatively, then positively. Negatively I answer thus: *viz.* Christ doth not come to us in this valley of tears, as Aaron was commanded to come into the holy place: *Let him not come at all times*, saith the Lord, *lest he dye*, Levit. 16. 2. If Christ should not come to us at all times of our distresse, we should die under our burthen, so comfortlesse would be our condition. When my body is afflicted, I shall be comfortlesse, if Christ do not come to me. When my soul is afflicted, I shall be more comfortlesse, if Christ do not graciously come to me. When my Head akes, Teeth akes, Back akes, or Belly akes: yea, when my least finger, or joynt in my body akes, I shall be comfortlesse, unlesse Christ come to me, so dolorous and comfortlesse a creature is man:

Wherefore as a positive answer to the question ere while proposed, know, that Christ comes to his Church Militant at all times: as long as his people live in this valey of tears, and are in any distresse of soul or body. He comes

comes to them in prosperity, to sweeten that, or else there would be but a little comfort & sweetnesse in it: but he comes to them in all adversity, after a most speciall manner to sweeten that, being of it self very bitter; bitternesse in the abstract: my meaning is, altogether bitter, without the least sweetnesse or pleasure in it, to soul or body: for no affliction is in the least manner or measure joyous, but as Christ by his kind comming to us then, makes it so.

But here I shall be thus questioned: viz. If Christ as a Comforter comes to his Church Militant, in every distresse of soul and body, how is it that many of Gods Children, in corporall and spirituall afflictions utter comfortless and hopeless language, as those that find no Comforter come to them? *Is thy mercy clean gone, and hast thou forgotten to be gracious? (saith David) hast thou shut up thy loving kindnesse in displeasure? and wilt thou be no more intreated? &c.* Many such like sad and dolorous complaints are still uttered by some of Gods dear Children: now if Christ as a Comforter, come to his in every distresse, why is it thus with these?

To this I will give answer, first more indirectly thus. Possibly that soul which thus complains, cannot but confesse, that Christ hath come and tendered comfort to him, though he through anguish and unbelief refused it. Now if our soul-Physitian come from

from heaven to us, and bring cordials for us, & we will take them, but cast them behinde our backs; shall our Phisitians be blamed for unfaithfulness and negligence towards his Patients, as one that did not visit them.

Again, possibly too, this Soul which thus complains, must confesse that Christ came to him at the very beginning of his untractableness towards God, and told him that this would quickly bring him into a comfortlesse condition, if not timely look't unto, and bid him again, and again, by a sweet still voice behind him, to be more plyable to God, as he tendred his favour, and his own comfort: Christ came to his Spouse, saying, *Open to me my Sister, my Love, my Dove, my faire one; for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night.* But though Christ thus kindly came to his Spouse, yet she unkindly put him off; and upon the matter no better than slighted him. *I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them? &c.* Because of this untractable carriage, Christ departed from his Spouse, and then she made many complaints: *I opened to my Beloved, but he had withdrawn himself and was gone:* The Spouse could not now truly say, that Christ had not come to her; but she might truly say, that he did come to her, but she slighted him, and therefore he was forced to leave her. Thus, tis with many

now

now. They mourn like *Rachel* in their misery, and art not comforted, because none from heaven comes to them: such as these cannot challenge Christ for not making good his promise, to come to them, if formerly he have come to them, and they have slighted him. If my Physician, observing my intemperancy in this or that, come to me and tell me, unlesse you refrain such and such things, you will certainly fall into such and such diseases, which are very dangerous; if I slight him in this, and afterward fall into those diseases, and lie groaning under them, I cannot blame my Physician, for not coming to me, but blame my self that did so slight him. So tis betwixt Christ and many a mourning soul: Christ hath come to them and told them, that if they go on in their sinfull course, that it will rob them quite of their Heavenly Comforts; but he in this friendly way hath been so far taken with the sweetnesse of something below Christ, and so at last hath found the evill of his own way, according to Christs prediction, and yet complains of Christ not coming to him; but how justly judge you.

Again, as this soul possibly cannot justly complain, that Christ hath not come to him: so possibly he cannot justly complain that Christ is not come to him. That soul which complaines after Christ, cannot truly say, that Christ is not come to him, for we never

never truly desire to come to Christ, or that Christ should come to us, unlesse he were already with us, and we with him. Christ, I conclude then, is come to this complaining soul, though not in that manner and measure as he desires him. The thought of what I long for, if I have least hope of attaining it, is a degree of consolation.

Finally and more directly, I answer to this complaining soul thus; Christ as a sensible and satisfactory Comforter, comes to us at his time, and not at ours. Now Christ's time to comfort mourners will make him most welcome; and that is usually when the soul is brought to the greatest extremity, that it is capable of, and not utterly miscarry. When *Peter* was ready to sink on the Sea, and cryed out, *Master, save me or I perish*, then Christ came to him, and caught him by the hand: thus doth Christ usually come with sensible and satisfactory consolations; when poor souls are almost quite spent with temptations, and soul anguish, and look every houre when they shall die and drop into hell. *He shall come to us as the latter and former raine unto the earth*, saith the Prophet. That is, at the seasonablest time, when the soul will make him most welcome; and that is, when burnt and scorcht with Satans fiery darts, as the earth with the heat of the sun; when parch and chapt, gaping for some heavenly showers: then

Christ's

Christ's visits will be kindnesse indeed : and Christ's consolations, sweet indeed. This still remember, O mourning soul, that Christ keeps his word, if he do not leave us comfortlesse : and this be assured he will not do ; I will not leave you comfortlesse, I will come to you.

But why wilt thou come to me, O my Saviour ? To this I answer, first thus ; viz. Christ will come to his Church Militant to be a Comforter to fulfill his Fathers will. *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, saith Christ, because the Lord hath annointed me, to preach good tidings to the meek : He hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaime liberty to the Captive, and the opening of prison to them that are bound, to proclaime the acceptable year of the Lord, to comfort all that mourn, &c.* By this Text we see, that Christ is annointed for this end : To come to us and be our Comforter, whilest we live here below mourning in Sion. What is said of the three friends of Job that I may say of the blessed Trinity. *They made an appointment together, to come to comfort him.* So the blessed Trinity, have made an appointment together to us by Christ, and in all distresses, sweetly to comfort us.

Secondly, Christ will come as a Comforter to his Church Militant, because he hath promised it. As Christ promised this in my Text ; so in many other Texts. *And if I go away, I will prepare a place for you, and will come again : and I will pray the Father, and he*

he shall give you another Comforter, that may abide with you for ever. By these promises Christ hath obliged himself to come as a comforter to us : let therefore our deservings of comfort be what they will, Christ will come to us, because he hath promised he will: Christ stands much upon his word: Christ is God, and God cannot lie. Though we believe not, yet he abideth faithfull, and cannot deny himself. A Christian is ready to say to Christ as Jephtha to the Elders of Gilead : Did not ye hate me, and expell me out of my Fathers house? and why are ye come to me now, when ye are in distresse? said Jephtha. So saith a christian, did not I hate thee O my Saviour, and did not I do what in me lay to expell thee from my soul, by my sinning again and again against thy Spirit? And why art thou come to me now, to comfort me in my distresse? Why, this that was aforesaid, may suffice, O sinfull soul, as an answer. Christ looks not at what thou hast done, but at what he hath promised: and his word he will keep, though we change as the heavens: heaven and earth shal pass away, but not one jot of his word shal fall to the ground. *I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you.*

These I conceive are the principall grounds, why Christ comes as a comforter to his Church Militant: two grounds more may be alledged, as *Causæ minus principales*, lesse principall causes; the first where

of is this: Christ comes to us in our distresses as a comforter, that we may not stretch out our hands unto iniquity. Man in distresse is so desirous of ease, that if Christ do not come to him and comfort him, he'll go to Sin and Satan for ease. Cain was disconsolate, and because Christ did not come to him as a comforter: he ran like a Vagabond up and down the world, to find ease in any thing. Judas was disconsolate, and because Christ as comforter did not come to him, he made a halter his comforter. Saul being in distresse by the *Philistins*, because Christ did not come to him by Urim, nor by Vision, nor by Prophets, he went to the Devill for comfort. Now that Christs Children may not thus do, Christ will not leave them comfortlesse, but will come to them.

The second ground why Christ will come to this Church Militant as a comforter, is this: that he may stop the mouthes of all ungodly wretches, who say of the ungoly when in great distresses, *Persecute and take them, for there is none to deliver them.* A wicked man looking upon a wounded soul with a carnall eye, breaks out into some such language, as *Achish* did concerning David, *Lo, you see the man is mad.* This man is a distracted person, fitter for *Bedlam*, than for Gods house: an idle crackt brain fellow unfit to come into into solemn assemblies. Now that Christ may silence such black-mouthed men

men as these, he graciously comes to such wounded souls, and heales their broken hearts, and binds up their wounds: he pours the Spirit of consolation upon such as were mourning all the day long, and makes them walk with joy and strong consolation, so that such as censured them for this and that, are forced to lay their hand upon their mouth, and to condemn themselves as blind Bats, and not to discern the waies of God towards his Children.

Having thus opened the poynt in hand, I will in the next place shew you how usefull it is, to the wicked and to the godly. Will not Christ leave any of his Children upon earth comfortlesse, but still as a Comforter come to them? Then you which live in your finnes, and so consequently none of Christs Children, may collect the unhappinesse of your condition from this poynt. You shall live and die comfortlesse, for Christ will not come to you as a Comforter; thus he comes onely to his Children. Christ will not come to you in prosperity as a Comforter; and therefore in the midst of sensuall laughter, your hearts will be sad: in the midst of all thy worldly contents, thy spirit will at times gnaw and beat within thee: and never will all thou enjoyest give any complacency of comfort to thee, because Christ as a Comforter comes not to thee. All outward comforts, without
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the inward consolations of Christ, they are as good broath unseasoned, which rather cloyes than contents the appetite; they weary, distract, and vex, and not revive the owner. Be it that thou art as wise as *Achitophel*, as eloquent as *Herod*, as learned as *Gamaliel*, as rich as *Nabal*, as honourable as *Haman*, as great in the Church as *Judas*; why, yet shalt thou live comfortlesse; that is, utterly destitute of celestiall consolation: one drop whereof hath more soul reviving sweetnesse it it, than all the things of this life can afford. Alas! what is Learning? what is Wit, Wealth, Honour, or any other worldly thing to comfort me, if Christ do not come to me? A man may have all that this world can afford: and yet hang himself for want of comfort, if Christ come not him, as *Achitophel*, *Judas*, & others have done.

Obj. No man laugh lowder, nor laugh oftner than wicked men in prosperity: no man merrier in an Ale-house, Play-house, Tavern, Fair, or Market, than they: and are not these then the only comfortable men in the world?

Sol. To this I answer first thus: Laughter is one thing: and spirituall consolation another thing. Every one that laughs, hath not a cheerfull spirit within: for in the midst of laughter a mans heart may be sad, saith *Solomon*. And so on the other hand, every one that hath a comfortable spirit, hath not a laughing face: We do not read that Christ ever laughed; and yet had more comfort in his

his spirit, than all the merry men of this world.

Secondly, I answer thus: Some mens spirits are so left of God to levity and vanity, that they will laugh at the wagging of a straw (as we say.) This is a great judgement of God upon the spirit, and not to be accounted a comfortable and happy condition? *Tis a pastime to fooles to do wickedly, saith Solomon.* This is not properly called mirth (saith he) but madnesse. You shall see mad men laugh sometimes exceedingly; and hoop, and hallow, as if their spirit were as full of joy as they could hold: what shall we conclude now, that these forlorn creatures are in a comfortable condition? Alas, say we, if they were but sensible of their condition, they would soon cease laughing, and begin lamenting. And so I may say to you of all that laugh and rejoyce, and yet live in their sins, and so consequently have no comforter from heaven come to them, they are mad men: were their eyes open to see their forlorne condition, they would quickly change their note, and turn their mirth into mourning, as James saith.

Quest. Why, but doth not Christ come to the wicked in prosperity?

Answ. Yes, no doubt to be made of it. Christ came to Belshazzar whilst he was quaffing in the Golden Vessels of the Temple, and wrote down his wickednesse in the wall. And thus he comes to all ungodly persons in prosperity, to write down all their ungod-

deeds, that so he may exactly judge them at the great day of account.

Quest. Why doth not Christ come as a comforter to wicked men that are great and wealthy?

Ans. Christ regards no man for his wealth, or for any externall greatness. If a man be never so rich, or never so honourable, yet if he have not denyed his lusts, and given up himself to Christ, to be ruled by him, Christ will never come to comfort him; if he would give him all he hath for his pains, he will not step a foot out of doores to a Prince, if he be wicked.

Ob. Why, but though he will not come to ungodly men as a comforter in prosperity, when they can make some shift without him, yet he will come to them as a comforter in adversity, when all other comfort fail.

Sol. No, he will not. Christ will not know thy soul in adversity, which art a disobeyer of him. As he would not let *Dives* have a drop of water to coole his tongue, though in unutterable torments, where many Ocean would not in the least measure have quenched the flames; no neither will he afford thee the least drop of consolation in thy greatest extremity; though thou crie Lord, Lord, and cut thy flesh in the fervency of thy spirit, like *Balaams* Priests, to prevaile; yet shalt thou be sent empty away. Nay Christ will be so farre from being a comforter to ungodly men

men when in misery, that he will add to their outward misery, inward misery. When thy body is in distresse, Christ will awake thy soul, that now lies asleep, and set thy conscience a gnawing within thee which will be greater torture than if thou wert racked in every limb. Thou mayest send for godly Ministers, and godly Friends to comfort thee then, and they possibly may deliver very comfortable things, but they shall be of no more favour to thy soul than the white of an egge; because Christ, as a Comforter will not speak those sweet things to thy soul, which thy Friends do to thy ears. As the Lord bewailes the miserable condition of *Jerusalem*, so I may bewaile the miserable condition of all ungodly men. *These two things are come unto thee, who shall be sorry for thee? Desolation and Destruction, and the Famine, and the Sword: by whom shall I comfort thee?* So say I to all ungodly persons: misery upon misery will first or last seiz upon you, and who then will be sorry for you? Famine, and Sword, and Pestilence, Sicknesse, and Death, and Judgement; and by whom will you be comforted? Your Honours cannot comfort you: your Riches and Friends cannot comfort you: your father the Devill he will not then comfort you: Your Conscience which you have often sinned against, shall not comfort you, but torture you: because Christ will not come to you.

to sprinkle it with his blood, and to pacifie it. So that I conclude all, thus : you will live comfortlesse, die comfortlesse, and abide in hell after death everlastingly comfortless.

Tis true all that you say Sir : man is a comfortlesse creature indeed, unlesse Christ come to him; I find it by woful experience. I have much wealth in my purse, and yet but little peace in my spirit. I see the Devil (me thinks) sit allride upon the top of my money-bags, waiting for me, when I come to comfort my self in the beholding of them : as to what this will come at last, I cannot tell : Sin I am sure I doe; and comfortlesse, because of sin, I am : and more comfortless every day I look to be, unlesse Christ come to me; and yet how to get him to come to me, I know not.

Wouldest thou, O comfortlesse creature have Christ to come to thee? Doe then to Christ, as *Lydia* did to *Paul*, lovingly invite him to come to thee, Make known thy comfortlesse condition to Christ, and then earnestly entreat him to visit thy poor soule. The ground why I exhort thee O sinner, thus to doe, is, because God hath promised to give his holy Spirit to them that aske it, *Mathe 11. 13.* If therefore thou wouldest have Christ by his Spirit to come to thee, invite him, aske him, beg and entreat him to come and dwell in thy soule, and tell him that he shall have every room in thy heart

heart at command. As *Rebecca's* Brother said to *Abrahams* servant; so doe thou say to *Christ*: Come in thou blessed of the Lord, wherefore standest thou without? for I have prepared the house, and roome for thy camels, &c. Come in thou blessed of the Lord, wherefore standest thou without? here is room for thee and all thy glorious traine. Here's an understanding, will, memory, affections, they shall be all at thy use and service O *Christ*, wherefore come in thou blessed of the Lord, and make thy abode with me. Thus continue crying to *Christ*, and longing for him, and by this thou wilt declare thy great love unto him, and so make thy selfe capable of that sweet promise, which saith, *If a man love me, the Father loveth him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him, John 14. 23.* Then will thy condition be comfortable indeed, when thou hast got such glorious inmates as these to dwell with thee.

Having thus spoken what I thought fit to the wicked by way of application from this point; I will now addresse my selfe to speak unto the godly, and shew them how usefull this point may be unto them. I shall first speak to strong men, and then unto Babes in *Christ*: to such as can tell me, that *Christ* as a comforter is come to them. Secondly, to such as can tell me they never yet found *Christ* as a comforter come to them: and lastly, to them who can tell

that they have found Christ as a Comforter come to them, but now they have lost him. To you that tell me you find the truth of this Doctrine by blessed experience, that Christ is come to you, I have only two things to say: First this, Make it sure to thy self that Christ indeed as a comforter is come to thee, and that thy soul is not deluded in thy joy and consolation. Secondly, strive so to walk, that thy comforter which is come to thee, may never depart from thee. First, strive to make it sure that Christ indeed comes to thee: that the comfort which thou hast is from the comforter, to wit, the Spirit of Christ; and not from the spirit of delusion.

There is great need that I should presse this instruction upon you, because the spirit of delusion is plentifully poured out in these latter dayes. The hypocrite hath his joy, and he judges that this his joy is the joy of the Holy Ghost, and as good as need to be: whereas it is a joy that shall perish (saith the Scripture) a joy that will end in desperate sorrow. He thinks that Christ as comforter is come to him: whereas 'tis onely the devil transformed into an Angel of light. And thus indeed are many thousands gulled and cheated in their comfort. Sadnesse would overshadow the smiling face of many a man, if he did but discern how groundlesse his joy and comfort is; and what a vaine shadow in stead of a true substance,

his poor soule is deluded withal. Wherefore my Brethren, it concerns you that tel me, you are sensible that the comforter is come to you, to take paines to make it sure to your selves, that your souls are not deluded.

When the Spirit of God came upon Saul that he prophesied, the people that knew him before, said, *What is come to the son of Kish? is Saul amongst the Prophets?* Thus do thou say to thy soul, who art so merry and comfortable; viz. What is come to thee, O my soul, that thou art now so joyful and chearful? Once, I am sure, thou wentst mourning all the day long. Is Christ as a comforter come to thee? If Christ by his Spirit have brought glad tidings to thee, why then, O my glory, continue in thy mirth: But if not, why art thou so merry, O my soul? thy mirth is but madness. As David questioned his soul for sadness, saying, *Why art thou so sad, O my soul? and why art thou so cast down within me?* so maist thou do well to question thy mirth, saying, Why art thou so merry, O my soul? and why art thou so much lifted up within me? Is thy comforter our Lord Jesus Christ indeed come to thee? O then my glory, cease not to declare thy comfort, by any comely posture and gesture; but if not, a house of mourning, O my soul, is fitter for thee than a house of mirth; garments of sackcloth and sadness would better become thee, than garments of

joy and gladness. You know how *Isaac* once spake to his son, *Art thou* (said he) *my very son Esau?* Gen. 27. 24. so do thou humbly question thy comforter, *Art thou my very comforter indeed?* *Art thou the very Christ, the son of God,* which speakest consolation to my soul? You know how *John* questioned Christ much after this manner, that he might not be deceived concerning him, *Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?* Mat. 1. 3. so do thou say, *Art thou he that should come and comfort my soul?* or should not I look for another? There be many false Christs, and false comforters now in the world, and they deceive many; wherefore, I beseech thee, speak out, and speak plainly to my soul, whether thou be he that should comfort me yea or no, that if I have obtained the true comforter, I may give God the glory of his great kindness; if not, I may seek out for another.

How should I know (may the strong man in Christ say to me) whether he that is come to my soul with consolation, be he that should come, or not? how should I be able to make it sure to my soul, that the consolation which I have, is from the Spirit of Christ, and not from the spirit of delusion?

To this I thus answer; *viz.* If he that is come to thy soul, be he that should come, to wit, Christ; thou shalt finde that he doth more works than one in thy soul: he doth not onely comfort thee, but he doth many

great works besides this. Christ doth many great works in a mans soul before he comforts him; and he doth many great works in his soul, after he hath comforted him. Christ doth many great works in the soul of man, before he comforts him: he doth break the heart before he binds it up; he first wounds the heart, before he will heal it: he casts down the soul for sin, before he he will raise it up. Now to break the heart of man, which the Scripture compares to an Adamant, Zech. 7. 12. for hardness, is a great work; and yet this doth Christ thoroughly, before he comforts thoroughly. The breaking of the hard heart of man, hath many great works about it, ere it be effected. The convincing the soul of sin, which self-conceited man is not easily brought unto. The making of sin out of measure sinfull in the souls apprehension, which blind man is not easily brought to see. The making of man to loath himself, for the evils which he hath committed against God, which manfull of self-love is not easily wrought unto. The making of man too long for peace and reconciliation with God, as the greatest happiness in the world, and to begge this blessing with tears, as a soul that sees he shall dye and perish eternally without it; which man that naturally hates God, is not easily won unto. Yet all these difficult works doth Christ do in the soul of man, before he comes as a comforter to him.

Which

Which Christ confirms, where he saith; *Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.*

Now, wou'dst thou know whether he that is come to thy soul, be he that should come or not? why then tell me, What did precede thy comfort which now thou hast? Did Christ lead thee to the Wells of Consolation by the waters of *Marah*? Did he bring thee to sowe in tears, ere he gave thee to reap thy great harvest of joy? Wast thou ever in the house of mourning? Did the spirit of heaviness for sin ever take hold on thee? Was thy hard heart first broken, and after this bound up? First wounded, and after healed? Didst thou go mourning for dishonouring God all the day long? and after many dolourous dayes spent did thy Comforter come to thee? Surely then he that is come, is he that should come, and do not look for another? but if otherwise, thou hast just cause to be jealous of thy joy.

Again, Christ as he doth great works in the soul before he comforts it, so he doth great works in the soul after he hath comforted it. That soul which Christ comforts, he makes a very fruitfull soul in all grace to his glory. No waters make the soul of a Christian grow in grace, like the waters of consolation. The comforting Spirit of Christ is in a Christian in the wayes of obedience, as winde and tide to a ship:

that which makes him run the ways of Gods commandments. That Christian which is comforted by Christ, prays fervently, and prays frequently. Consolation gives wings to supplication. That Christian which is comforted by Christ, praiseth God with strong affection. A soul comforted by Christ, is as an instrument well tuned by a skilful Musician: he will upon every occasion, make sweet melody in the ears of the Almighty. True consolation is from heaven, and it carries that soul strongly to heaven, in which it is. True consolation is from Christ, and it will make a Christian live wholly to Christ. To whom much is forgiven, they love much: and his love constrains them to deny themselves, and to follow Christ unto death.

Wouldest thou know then for certain, O strong man in Christ! that he which is come to thy soul, is he which should come? Why then look what activity is in thy soul to duty. Is thy soul as a Gyant re'freshed after wine? strong and vigorous to the practice of all good duties? Art thou abundant in the work of the Lord? Art thou a sweet Singer in *Israel* of the praises of the Lord? Is thy heart at thy mouth leaping within thee, like the Babe in *Elizabeths* womb, when thou art telling what God hath done for thy soul? Art thou (in a word) a holy and heavenly man, as one comforted by

a holy and heavenly God? Doth thy joy transcend the joys that this world affords, in sweetness? Doth it raise thy spirit to admire the love of God? and doth it make thee dead to secular thoughts? and to account naked carnal mirth, madness? empty husks for Brutes to feed on? Then mayest thou comfortably conclude, that he which is come to thy soul, is he which should come, and do not look for another: but if thou art merry and cheerful, but not holy and heavenly, he that is come to thy soul, is not he that should come: wherefore, I beseech thee to look for another.

A second instruction, which I would commend to strong men in Christ, is this: after thou hast made it sure to thy soul that Christ as a Comforter, is indeed come to thee, then strive so to walk, that he may never depart from thee. So a man may walk, that Christ as a comforter may forsake his soul. David had woful experience of this truth, and so doubtless have many else of the godly. So a man may walk that Christ as a comforter never depart from him. But how should I thus walk, saith the comforted soul, that I might enjoy this heaven below, till I come to that above, and so go from joy to joy, from joy unspeakable and full of glory, to joy that cannot enter into any mortal heart to conceive of?

To this I thus answer, Do not grieve Christ

Christ that is come to thee: Secondly, do all that thou canst to delight him, if thou wouldest have him continually abide with thee. Do not sit down and rest as one that hath a license to be lazy, and as if all thy work were done, now thy comforter is come to thee; this will grieve him, and quickly make him leave thee. Thou hast obtained Christ to come as a comforter to thee; well: yet let me tell thee as *Moses* did the *Israelites*. *You are not.* (said he) *as yet come to the rest, and to the inheritance which the Lord your God giveth you.* So say I to thee, O comforted soul! thou art not yet come to those degrees of consolation, which thou mayest attain unto in this life, thou continue to be thirsty. The joy of the holy Ghost is a bottomless Well, which thou canst never draw dry: and the more thou drawest, the fresher and sweeter still shalt thou find it. The joy of the holy Ghost is no surfeiting thing, as some earthly sweets are; and therefore thou mayest safely say, *Lord, evermore give me of this bread:* fill my soul with flagons of this precious liquor: let thy love shed be abroad in my heart by the holy Ghost: let thy soul delight her self in this fatness.

Secondly, now Christ as a Comforter is come to thee, do not wax wanton against him; this also will grieve him, and make him quickly forsake thy soul as a comforter. Let all the manifestations of thy comfort be
suitable

sutable to thy Comforter : holy as he is holy ;
spirituall and heavenly as he is. When ye are
come into the good land, take heed that ye do
not forget the Lord (said Moses to Israel.)
So say I to you that find Christ with you as
a comforter, which are come to the fellow-
ship of the Spirit, and to the participation of
that transcendent comfort which is by him :
take heed that ye grow not giddy-headed,
and forget God and your selves. The wa-
ters of Consolation are strong waters, and
mans weak head and heart cannot bear
much of them steadily, but are ready to reel
on one side or other. When the clouds of
heaven have well watered the earth ; then
do weeds as well as good hearbs spring a-
pace : so when Christ by his Spirit, sweetly
waters the soul with consolation ; then levi-
ty and vanity, as well as Christian mirth and
cheerfulness, spring a main, if a Christian be
not very watchfull over his soul, to pluck up
such weeds by the roots, as soon as they begin
to shew themselves. I conclude this thus :
thou that art comforted by the Spirit, let
Spirit, let not the manifestations of thy com-
fort grieve the Spirit. This remember, that
Satan hath an Art to bring evill out of the
greatest good, as God hath an Art to bring
good out of the greatest evill : and therefore
beg that thou mayest not be ignorant of any
of his devices, nor unable to resist them, if
thou wouldst not lose thy comforter.

See

Secondly, if thou wouldst have thy comforter to abide still with thee; as thou must not grieve him, so thou must do all that thou canst to delight him. Let it be thy meat and drink to follow all the motions of the Spirit of Christ: whithersoever Christ would have thee go, cheerfully obey him; this will delight thy comforter exceedingly, and make him to rejoyce to continue with thee. If Christ say unto thee, as to the Fishermen, *Follow me*: Do thou readily reply, as the Scribe, *Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest*, Mat. 4. 19. and 8. 19. This is to declare the genuine disposition of Christ's people, which Christ is exceedingly taken withal. Christ's people are a willing people in their obedience: *Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power*, &c.

Secondly, humbly and compassionately tell disconsolate souls, what Christ hath done for my soul: This will delight thy comforter much, and make him rejoyce to continue with thee. Christ delights to see his children communicative of the sweet meats which he gives them. And therefore as *Isaiah* said to *Babylon*, so do thou, O comforted soul, to such as go mourning all the day long: *Come* (said she) *and I will shew thee the man whom thou seekest*, Judg. 4. 3. Come, O sad soul, that canst not finde him whom thy soul loveth, I will shew thee the man whom thou seekest; the manner of his coming

coming to my poor soul, and how long he made me wait upon him, ere he would come to me, and how well he hath now made me amends for all his slaying. And therefore, *Although thou sayest thou shalt not see him, yet judgement is before him, therefore trust thou in him, Job 35. 14. For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come, it will not tarry. Hab. 2. 3.* The more imparting of experiments of love we are, to the glory of Christ, the more still will Christ graciously give us to our further comfort. And this indeed is Gods end in comforting some of his children, that they may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith they themselves are comforted of God: as the Apottle sweetly affirms.

Thirdly, thank Christ humbly and heartily for his coming to thee, if thou wouldest have him abide still with thee. The Israelites, when they came into the promised Land, which flowed with milk and honey, they were to take the first of all the fruits of the earth, and put them in a basket, and so present them to the Priest, saying, *viz. And now behold, I have brought the first fruits of the land, which thou the Lord hast given me, Deut. 26.* Thus were they to set their first fruits before the Lord, and to worship before him, as you may see at large. Why you

you that enjoy Christ as a Comforter, you have received the first fruits of that good land, which *Canaan* typified, which flows with milk and honey. Bring therefore these first fruits, and set them before God, and worship: bring the sweet comforts of the holy Ghost in your hearts, before the Lord, and say, Behold O Christ, these and these are the sweet consolations of thy Spirit: and lo for them all I humbly render praise to thy name. Such mighty enemies of my peace hast thou conquered: such doubts which so long troubled me, hast thou answered: such wants which so long time kept me exceeding low, hast thou supplied: to thee O God be the glory of thine own goodness.

You have great cause thus to magnifie the Lord for his mercy, which find Christ as a Comforter come to you. You enjoy that blessing, which exceedeth all outward blessings. The light of Gods countenance lifted up, upon a poor mourning-soul, 'tis of far greater value then Corn, Wine, Oyle; then Corall, Rubies, or any choice thing that this world can afford. The naked revelation of Christ in the soul of man. is of more worth than all these, saith *Solomon*; the most glorious revelation of Christ then to the soul, which the soul of man is capable of in this life, must needs be of much more transcendent worth. You enjoy that blessing which exceedeth many inward blessings. It exceedeth knowledge.

for

for what is knowledge in the head, to the joy of the holy Ghost in the heart? One beam of light in the understanding, is of more worth than all the Silver and Gold, Gems, and Jewels in the world; and yet one beam of the light of Gods countenance, shining upon the heart, though but by reflexion from the face of Jesus Christ, is of more worth than all knowledge which human Itudy can attain unto. I cannot say that this blessing exceedeth the least saving grace in the soul: but this I can safely say; that consolation, 'tis the gloss and glory of every grace: every grace shines in its full lustre, where the Comforter dwels. This I can further say, that you enjoy that blessing which makes Heaven a Heaven, and which makes Earth a Heaven to you: and therefore you have great reason to magnifie the Lord for his mercy. The more of Heaven we enjoy upon Earth, the more should we set our selves to do the work of them which are in Heaven, whil'st on Earth.

Fourthly, finally let Christs mediate comming to thee by his Spirit, make thee long earnestly for his immediate comming to thee in his own person: this delights Christ, that his Sponse should say, Come, Revelation 22. 17. as the Spirit doth; That she should long for the wedding day, as he doth. When good old Simeon had imbraced the consolation of Israel, for which he so long waited

waited, he then desired presently to be dissolved: so thou that hast imbraced the consolation of *Israel*, shouldst in holy manner with *Simeon*, *Job* and *Paul*, desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ, which is best of all. You whom Christ hath kissed with the kisses of his lips, should long earnestly to lie between his breasts all night; my meaning is, to have a full enjoyment of Christ. Thus have I done speaking to such who can tell me that Christ as a comforter is come to them.

In the next place, I address my self to speak to such of the godly, who can tell me that they never yet found Christ as a comforter come to them. Two or three things I have to say to you from this sweet doctrine.

First, I would have you labor to believe this doctrine, that Christ *will not leave you comfortless, but will certainly (at last) come to you*. Christ hath repeated his promise, which is as a bond with many seals; and therefore thou hast just ground to believe, O comfortless soul, that Christ *will not leave thee comfortless, but will come to thee*.

Object. What just ground have I to believe, that Christ *will come to me*, seeing he is holy, and I am unholy? he is glorious in holiness, and I am abominable in sin and wickedness, saith the weak comfortless soul.

Sol. Art thou more vile than *Manasseh*? Christ came to him, and comforted him. Art thou more muddy and earthly than *Zo-*

ch. 11.

cheus? Christ came to him, and comforted him. Art thou more devilish than *Mary Magdalene*, out of whom were cast seven Devils? Christ came to her: and filled her soul with strong consolation. Why shouldst not thou believe, that Christ will come to thee too, and quiet, and comfort thy mourning spirit?

Sol. But secondly I answer thus: viz. Christ doth not so much look how thou art qualified, as at what he hath promised: Christ hath promised he will come to thee, and he is faithful, and will do it. If thy soul were never so poor, never so blinde, never so wretched, never so naked; yet Christ having promised to come to thee, he will make good his word; though he come backward with a mantle to cover thy nakedness, as *Shera* and *Japhet* did to *Noah*. If thy soul were full of wounds, if thy soul were full of running putrifying sores, if thou wert as black with sin as an *Ethiopian*, if thou wert as spotted with sin as a *Leopard*; nay, if thy soul did stink within thee, as *Lazarus*, after taken out of the earth again: yet Christ having promised to come to thee, and comfort thee; he will do it, though he hold his nose while he be comforting thy stinking, nasty soul. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but not a jot or tittle of Christs promise shall fail. *The voice of my Beloved, behold he cometh leaping upon the Mountains, and skipping upon the hills, Cant. 2. 8.* Though there be mountains

mountains and hills of sin in thy soul: yet Christ will come skipping over all these with comfort to thy soul, rather than thou shalt be left comfortless.

Wherefore, O weak, comfortless soul, say not of thy Saviour and comforter, as Balaam did, *I shall see him, but not now, I shall behold him, but not nigh*, Num. 24. 17. I shall see Christ come with a witness; nay with many thousand witnesses at the great day, when *every eye shall see him*; but I shall not see him come to me now, in this soul-dolour, as a Comforter. I shall behold him peradventure, as Moses beheld the Holy Land, a farre off: he will never come nigh my poor soul, to stay it with those comforts which it needs. Cease, O weak soul, this incredulous language: and strive to believe, and this sweet promise I treat off shall be made good unto thee. No sinne so mighty to keep thy comfort from thee as unbelief. Say then, O mourning Christian, to thy comfortless soul, *Yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry*, Heb. 10. 37. He that hath said he will come as a comforter to thee, will come and will satisfie thy soul with consolation, as with marrow and fatness. Say to thy sad soul with the Psalmist, *My God will come, and will not keep silence*: he will speak consolation so plainly, that my ignorant soul shall understand; so powerfully, that

my incredulous soul shall believe, and own
 her own mercies. Thou art now tossed and
 almost drowned; O my soul, with restless
 waves of misery; but the Spirit will move upon
 these waters: thou shalt see Christ coming to-
 wards thee, upon these troublesome waves
 thou, and say, *Be not afraid, it is I: I that have*
loved thee, and given myself for thee, and
none shall pluck thee out of my hand.

Secondly, as I would have thee to strive
 firmly to believe this truth: so I would have
 thee endeavour patiently to wait the accom-
 plishment of it. Believe that Christ will come
 to thee, and wait patiently until he do come.
 There is good ground why every soul should
 patiently wait for Christs coming to him,
 whether we consider our selves which are
 to be visited, or Christ our visitor. If thou,
 O comfortless soul, consider thy self which
 is to be visited, there is great reason thou
 shouldst wait patiently till Christ come to
 thee, how long soever he stay.

First, thou art a creature, and Christ is
 Creator; and should not a creature wait on
 his Creator? Thou art a servant, and Christ
 is thy Lord; and should not a servant wait on
 his Lord? Consider thee in thy highest re-
 lations, and they all call for waiting. Thou
 art a son, and Christ is thy Father; and should
 not a son wait on his Father? Thou art a
 wife, and Christ is thy Husband; and should
 not a wife wait on her Husband?

Secondly,

Secondly, consider that thou hast deserved that Christ should never come to thee, and yet for all this, seeing he will come to thee, hast not thou just cause to wait patiently till he come, how long soever it be first? Before thou calling thou didst reject Christ; and since calling, thou hast often grieved Christ; and hast not thou then deserved that Christ should never come to thee? Thou hast quenched many a sweet motion of the Spirit of Christ; thou hast turned the deaf ear on the sweet still voyce that hath spoken behinde thee times without number, and so slighted the Spirit of Christ; and hast not thou then justly deserved, that Christ as a Comforter should never come to thee? yet seeing he will come for all this unkindness, hast not thou just cause to wait patiently for him, how long soever he stay? Thou hast many weeks, many moneths, nay many years gone along in a course of grieving Christ; and dost thou think much of waiting a few weeks, a few moneths, a few years, for Christ to come to comfort thee?

Take this in another form: Thou didst make Christ wait a long time upon thee ere thou wouldst let him abide with thee as a spirit of Reformation; and is there any just cause then, that thou shouldst wait patiently a long time upon him, if he will have it so, ere he abide with thee as a Spirit of Consolation? How many knocks did Christ

ere at thy stubborn heart, ere thou wouldst
 en to him: how much dew of the night
 dilled upon his locks, ere thou wouldst give
 m house-room in thy heart? how many
 ercies? how many corrections were all spilt
 on thee, ere Christ could win thee to re-
 est him; canst thou tell? if thou canst not,
 ink not much, if Christ make thee shed a
 w tears, and breath out a few groans, ere
 ebring glad tidings of peace unto thee.

Secondly, if thou consider Christ thy visi-
 er, there is all the reason that can be, that
 ou shouldst wait patiently, till he come to
 ee. Christ will certainly come to thee:
 Christ will come to thee at the fittest time:
 Christ will come richly when he doth come,
 hich are all special grounds of patience.
 Christ will come to thee, O comfortless soul,
 hough it may seem to thee something long
 ist. Thou dost not wait for one that will
 ot come at all, as the *Turk* waiteth for
 Mahomet: nay, thou dost not wait for
 ne that will frivolously delay the time of
 is coming. Thou dost not wait for one
 hat will deceive thee: Christ hath promi-
 ed to come to thee, and he is faithful, and
 cannot deny himself. There are two things
 Faithfulness, first, that a man should own
 what he hath said; and then secondly, that
 he should make it good. Now both these
 will Christ do: Christ will not eat his
 words, as we say: What he hath promised
 he

he will confess, and will make good whatsoever he labour or loss he be at to do it. Christ is not mutable as we are, to promise one thing to day, and recall it again to morrow: he is *immutable and changeth not, therefore we are not consumed.*

Thou dost not wait for one that will frivolously delay the time of his coming. Christ will not deal with thy comfortless soul, as those sorry guests dealt with Christ; make excuses: one had bought a yoke of Oxen, and therefore could not come: another a Farm, &c. Christ will not tell thee, as *Abraham*, Dives in hell, between thy soul and him is a great gulf, so that there can be no intercourse between them: Nor that from heaven to earth, is too long a journey for him to make: He will not tell thee, that the place where thy sick comfortless soul lies, is filthy and altogether unfit for him to come to: He will not tell thee that thy soul is so far gone in grief and desperate sorrow, that it is in vain for him to come to thee. Christ puts none of these delays upon any of his patients.

No, the ground why Christ staves, is that he may come at the fittest time; and then he will come with healing in his wings, if the devils in hell should oppose him, which me thinks should be a satisfactory ground of patience to any disconsolate soul. *Physician yet apply this, and that, further*

vacuation

vacuation, rather then cordials: as knowing
the body not yet fit for cordials, will not any
wise man submit patiently to his way? so if
Christ forbear giving thy sick soul cordials,
he that well knows thy soul not fit yet
for such luscious things, wilt not thou with
much thankfulness acknowledge his great
mercies over thy soul, and with all patience
wait his leasure? I patiently undergo the pain
of drawing plaisters, when I know my sore
is not fit for healing: thus should it be in
her spirituall distresses: we should patiently un-
dergo grief and sorrow untill our souls be fit
for consolation, and then we shall be sure to
be healed.

Finally, be sure of this, O mourning soul,
that Christ will come richly, when he doth
come; and therefore me thinks thou shouldst
wait patiently for him: what Merchant but
would wait patiently, the return of his ship
from the longest voyage, if he were sure that it
would richly return at last. Christ will
come very richly furnished, with the com-
forts of the holy Ghost, which are unspeak-
able and glorious, to your souls that mourn
after him, and wait for him. What the A-
postle once spake of himself in relation to
the Romans; that may I truly say of Christ,
in relation to all that mourn after him: And
I am sure that when I come unto you, I shall
come (saith he) in the fulnesse of the blessing
of the Gospell of Christ, Rom. 15. 29. Christ, I
am

am sure, O mourning soul, when he doth come unto thee, he will come in the fulness of the blessing of the Holy Ghost : thou shalt have joy in the Holy Ghost unspeakable and glorious. Thou by long waiting art made a more vast vessel to hold the precious waters of consolation : and Christ by long staying, doth (as I may say) the more furnish himself with these waters of life, to refresh, fill, and satisfie thy thirsty soul, when he comes to thee. Christ will heal thoroughly thy broken heart, and binde up all thy wounds : he will answer all thy doubts, and clear all thy scruples : he will quiet thy quarrelling conscience, and still thy complaining spirit : he will fill thy sad soul with joy and gladness, and thy dejected spirit with songs of thanksgiving.

If these things, O mourning soul, will not make thee wait patiently, till thy comforter come to thee, but thou wilt murmur and repine, and fall upon indirect ways to get consolation ; know, that by this practice thou wilt make thy condition more miserable, then at present it is : Thou wilt grieve him that should come as a comforter to thee, and if thou by thy sin make Christ grieve how can Christ by his Spirit make thee joyce ? and if thou set him a mourning thou can onely comfort thee, by whom wilt thou be comforted ? Dost thou think to have Christ to thee, by a dogged disposition ?

Christ

Christ may pittie, and cure thy humors, but
 will never be by consolation. He will bring
 thee to be lowly and meek ere thou shalt
 find rest to thy soul: he will make thee wil-
 ling to lie under his feet, glad of crumbs of com-
 fort, and willing to wait for them till Christ
 hath dined, and every child served.

If thy corrupt soul hanker after the plea-
 sure of sin again, because Christ as a comforter
 doth not come to thee, and thou be resolved
 to pick and choose, amongst the sins thy soul
 knows, to find out one that thy soul most loves,
 to make a Comforter to thee as the *Israelites*
 in their dogged humour made them a Captain
 to return to *Egypt* again; know this, that
 what sin thou pitchest upon to make a Com-
 forter, that sin will Christ make a devill tor-
 ture thee: Christ will make thee know by wo-
 ll experience, that the sweetest sin is a bitter
 and miserable comforter: that the least sin, is
 too great an evill, truly to comfort the soul:
 that to go to the devill for consolation, is to
 make faster haste for comfort then good speed:
 that neither sin, nor any thing in the world
 beside sin shall comfort thy soul, when he
 himself will not.

3. That last instruction that I have to com-
 mend to thee; O comfortlesse soul! that
 didst never yet find Christ as a comforter
 come to thee, is this: observe how Christ
 comes, and do not put him off, Christ comes
 to comfortlesse souls with comfort, in a pro-
 mise;

D

promise;

mise; as I have at large shewed you. The promise Christ opens before the soul, that he may see the blessing wrapt up in it, which he needs; and then often repeats it to the soul, that he may rely upon it: instances to illustrate this way of Christ, I have given you, things must not be here again repeated. That which here I would press by way of Application, is, that you which are comfortless souls, would preserve this secret way of the comforter, and meet him. Art thou temp-

red? and dost thou now hear
 'Tis with many a sweet still voyce, as it were
 Christians in their minority, as it was with
 Samuel, they do not know the voice of the
 Lord, speaking in a promise, & therefore
 I thought good to note this last instruction.
 behind thee, saying, My grace is sufficient for thee? why, this is the voice of thy beloved,
 that is come to thee; embrace what he saith; rest upon it, turn not thy comfort away now, by unbelief, & peevish pettish humours. Hast thou fallen into sin, by the strength of temptation, and thine own corruption? and dost thou hear such a sweet voyce behind thee as this
The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from sinne: 1 John 1. 7. Why this is the Language of thy beloved, he is come to comfort thee O mourning soul; do not thrust him away by unkind language of unbelief and passion. Hear what he saith, for it is sweet: strive to believe what he saith, for it is sure. As he said unto Jacob his son, after he had

some discourse at a distance with him, come neer now and kisse me my sonne: Gen. 27. 26. So should such comfortlesse souls say to Christ, when they hear Christ speaking, as it were at a distance, softly and coldly to them, the sweet and melodious promises of his word: come neer now, O my beloved, and kisse me with these kisses of thy lips, for thy love is better than wine: what thou sayest to my soul, say it with such life, that my heart may no longer be faithlesse, but believe and give glory to thee. I have now done speaking to you, who never yet had the Comforter come to you.

I come now in the last place to speak a word or two particularly, to such of Gods people, who can tell me that they have found Christ as a comforter to come to them, but now have lost Him. Three things I have to say to these. First, labour to be sensible of thy loss. Secondly, blame not Christ for departing from thee. Thirdly, use all holy means to get him to return to thee again. First I would have thee, O deserted soul! to labour to be truly sensible of thy loss. Though it be that some are deeply sensible of this great loss; yet others are as deeply stupid, which moves me to note this instruction. For a man to be stupid and senseless under corporall afflictions, argues a very ill temper of spirit; but for a man to be stupid and senseless under spirituall afflictions,

ons, under such a spirituall affliction as this; the loss of the Sun : the loss of Christ as a Comforter, argues a very ill temper of spirit indeed. Strive therefore, O deserted stupid soul! to affect thine heart throughly with thy loss. Thou hast lost more than *Job*, when he had lost children, substance, health, honours, and friends : nay, thou hast lost more, then if thou hadst lost this world ; nay, thou hast lost more than if thou hadst lost thy life ; which is of more worth than the world : thou hast lost Christ, which is richer then this world, and sweeter then thy life. What an infinite loss were it to this world, to loose the Sun? 'twere at once to loose all : *Pereunte sole, pereunt omnia* : for all things serviceable for the use of man, depend upon the motion and influence of that glorious Body. What a loss then is it to the lesser world, to lose Christ the Sun of Righteousnesse ? 'Tis to lose all good at once, for soul and body. All Graces close and wither when Christ departs, as all fragrant flowers when the Sun withdraws his influence, And when these flowers wither in the soul a man is a moving Dughtll, that stinks in the nostrils of God and man, where ever he comes. A man that hath lost Christ, may truly say as she when the Ark was lost that his glory is departed. As the Sunne is the glory of the greater World, so Christ the Sunne of Righteousness, is the glory

of the lesser World, to wit, man.

Thou hast lost that in the world, that is the world, that is more worth then the world, and which all the world can never help thee to. Thou hast lost that which would have made the worst condition in this life, a Heaven; whereas the best without it, is but a hell. Thou hast lost that which would have been to thy soul a continual feast; whereas now thy soul is in a continuall famine and leanness. Thou hast lost thy spirits; and thy soul is in dead palse, so that thou art a living dead man, fit for no spirituall service. Thou hast lost thy head, thou hast lost thy eyes, thou hast lost thy hands, thou hast thy cloathing; nay, thou hast lost thy best father, thy best husband, thy best friend; all this, and much more comfort is Christ to man. Thou hast great reason then, O deserted soul, to lay to heart thy losse.

Lay to heart thy losse; this is comely; but do not blame Christ from departing from thee; this is uncomely, and unrighteous. Uncomely; for it doth not suit with wildomes children, to lay folly to their Maker. Unrighteous, for thou constrainst him to depart from thee, otherwise he had never left thee: thou didst sin again and again of weaknesse, and yet Christ is a Comforter did not depart from thee; until thou beganst to take pleasure in unrighteousnesse; and to make sinne a custome, a right eye, a very for-

viceable thing unto thee, Christ did not leave thee. Thou beganst to wax wanton against Christ, and then Christ call thee off. Thou beganst to play Apostate and to backslide in heart from Christ; and then thou fellest off from Christ; and then he fell off from thee, and filled thee with thine own wayes. Now these things seriously considered, hast thou any cause to blame CHRIST for departing from thee? It is comely and a very righteous thing for Wisesdomes children to justifie wisdom in all his wayes, as to others, so to our selves. Wherefore thus do, O deserted soul; say, Righteous art thou, O Christ, in departing from me, and righteous mayest thou be, if thou never return to me, so unkindly have I dealt with thee.

Then set thy self seriously to the use of all holy meanes, whereby thou may'st get thy Comforter to return to thee. Examine thy soul thoroughly thou must, to find out what evil deprived thee of so great a good: and in serious soul-searching, God will speak to thy conscience, and conscience will speak plainly to thee, and tell thee wherein thou didst give distaste to thy comforter, and what was the cause he forsook the soul.

And when thou hast found out that evil, which conscience tells thee, deprived thee of so great a good, thou must fall very foul with it, how sweet soever it hath been unto thee.

thee. Thy great work must be, to bring thy heart to a holy *revenge* upon this sin : to abhor it, and thy self because of it : and to become very vile, as *Job* saith, and very low in thine own eyes. Bring thy heart to admire the infinite patience and mercy of God, that things are no worse with thy soul. That God had not cut thee off in the acting of that sin for which he deserted thee : that he hath left any place for repentance, and given the least desire to set about this work.

And when thou art come thus far : possibly the light of Gods countenance may begin now and then, to glance into thy soul, as at some little cranny : or at least some more than ordinary lightsomness may appear in thy dark duli soul, as there doth in the dark morning, some space of time before the sun appears, that had left this Horizon. Now this beam of light, or this little lightsomness of soul, thou must much admire ; and acknowledge an unfathomed depth of love in it, that God should so much as once stoop to cast an eye after thee more, to give thy soul the least refreshing, that didst abuse flagons of love.

By this glimpse of light, or glimmering light, you are to strengthen your faith, in the belief of this, that light will more and more appear, as the light of the morning unto the perfect day : and so consequently to follow God with so much the more fervency of prayer, for the return of his wonted kindness *Jo-*

Joseph you know, carried himself very roughly to his brethren which had abused him, for some space of time; and put them in great fear of the loss of their lives; told them they were *Spies*, and many harsh words he gave them, and harsh looks: but at last when his brethren had brought him to *Benjamin*, and discoursed a while, *Joseph's* bowels began to work, and he could no longer with-hold his brotherly love, *Come near to me, I pray, you, I am Joseph your brother, &c.* Thus Christ our elder Brother deals with us, who do unkindly & unbrotherly use him. he will handle us very roughly, & put us in fear of the loss of our best lives: he will make our consciences speak bitter things against us; & let loose the devill to tell us that we are *Spies*, hypocrites, & false friends to Christ; In this distracted, affrighted, perplexed state, he may hold us many dayes, many weeks, many moneths; but he cannot hold in his brotherly love alwayes, if we patiently bear his frowns, and kindly intreat him, and bring *Benjamin* to him, his own blood and merits; this will make his bowels work: and make him unmask himself and say, come neer to me, O mourning souls, tossed and not comforted; I am Christ your elder Brother, whom ye unkindly used: in a little wrath I hid my face from you, but now with everlasting kindness will I embrace you.

Trinuiti Dei gloria:

FINIS.



CHRISTS COMMUNION

With His
Church Militant.

2 Tim. 4. v. 22.

The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy Spirit.

THis Text is *Pauls* sweet affectionate salutation well to *Timothy*. Many grave and gracious instructions *Paul* had given *Timothy*; but 'tis not much what man saith to the ear, as what Christ saith to the heart, that works effectually, to set a man about his duty: and therefore doth *Paul* in the conclusion of all his Christian counsell to *Timothy*, pathetically pray, *That the Lord Jesus Christ would be with his spirit.*

The best teaching of man is but as water spilt upon the ground, unless Christ inwardly teach the spirit. If I am taught my duty by a *Paul*, one in gifts not inferiour to the chiefest apostles, yet unless Christ be with thy spirit, to make things take root there, all will ye and wither, like good seed cast into bad ground. And therefore *Paul* saw it but need.

full, as to teach the ear, so to intreat the Lord to teach and strengthen the spirir. *The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy Spirit.*

There is a great distance (you know) between the ear and the heart : it is an easie thing for a man to bring home things unto the one, but no less then the almighty power of Christ, will bring home things unto the other. There is an incomparable hardness up- the heart of man naturally : it is harder than an *Adamant* : now though a child with his little finger, may make a dint upon dough, yet a Gyant with all his strength, cannot make dints upon an *Adamant* ; much less can all created strength, make divine impressions upon the spirit of man ; and therefore it is, that *Paul* doth implore an Almighty strength to do thus, *The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy Spirit.*

Why doth not *Paul* here , wish riches and honours and pleasures unto *Timothy* ? Is the bare presence of Christ with a mans spirit such a blessing ? To this I answer, riches and honours, &c. they are *bona*, but not *optima* ; good things, but not the best things. Earthly things though good in themselves, yet are no further forth good to me, then as the Lord Jesus Christ is with my spirit, to guide it to use them ; and therefore *Paul* as one truly wise, prayed for the prime good for *Timothy* for that good which makes all other things work together good, to wit, *That to have the Lord Jesus Christ with our spirits, is a prime*

and principall blessing. Paul here wisheth it to Timothy, as a cardinall blessing, *The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit.*

Enucleatio propositionis.

To have Christ with our spirits, &c. How can Christ be present with man upon earth who is now ascended, and sitteth at the right hand of his Father in heaven?

The Apostle doth hint an answer to this question, in the form of his prayer, if you observe it. *The Lord Jesus Christ, saith he, be with thy spirit.* He speaks of such a presence as will fitly yeeld Communion and fellowship to the spirit of man. There is a double presence of Christ with man, corporall and spirituall joyntly; or meerly spirituall. With iust men made perfect in glory, Christ is corporally present; they behold his wounded body made a glorious body, as a continuall assurance of the Resurrection of their own vile bodies unto the same similitude. And with them Christ is present, spiritually filling them with those joyes, the taste of which upon earth, is called *unspeakable and full of glory.* Of this communion speaks Christ himself; *I in them, and thou in me that they may be made perfect in one, Joh 17.23.* As the soul is *tota in toto, & tota in qualibet parte*: according to the whole, in that whole which is less noble then it self: according to the whole, that is, according to that full force and energy which the soul hath, it actu-

ates

ares and organizeth every member of the body, the least as well as the greatest ; So Christ in the mysticall body of Saints glorified, is as I may say, *Totus in toto, & totus in qualibet parte.* Whole Christ doth wholly exercise dominion in every glorified soule; hence it is, that all such soules, are wholly holy, & wholly happy, that is perfectly holy, and perfectly happy; for as much as Christ, who is in the fulness of his Fathers glory, is fully present with them.

Secondly, there is a presence of Christ with man, meerly spirituall; that is, such a presence, as whereby not the person, but the providence of Christ may be seen; Such a presence as *superiora* have with *inferiora*, not a *contiguall*, but a *virtuall* presence; a presence of influence and governaunce, as the Sun hath with us, by his raye: and beams. And this presence is either *Commune* or *Speciall*.

The *commune* presence of Christ with man, is that whereby man upheld and guided, according to the being of a ratiōall creature, Of this presence of Christ with man, speaks the Apostle, *that they should seek the Lord, if happily they might feel after him and find him, though he be not far from every one of us, for in him we live, move, and have our being, Acts 17. 27. 28.* Christ as an upholder of each creature, is not far from every one of us: that is, he is still present with us thus, and with all Nations of men, which he hath made of one blood, to dwell upon

the face of the earth. This presence of Christ with man therefore, cannot properly be called a *prime* and *principall blessing*, a choise and favour, because it is commune to mankind in generall, yea commune to all creatures below man; for God is with all the works of his hands, to uphold every creature according to its proper species.

Secondly, there is a speciall presence of Christ with man, which is that efficacious working of the Spirit of Christ, in the spirit of man; whereby it is made one spirit, with the Spirit of Christ, in willing and nilling, according to that of the Apostle, *He that is joy- ned to the Lord is one spirit.*

There is a speciall presence of Christ, with the bodies of men, for the good of them, which the *Psalmist* intimates where he saith, *That he knows our frame: and remembers that we are but dust: and that the Angels of the Lord pitch their Tents about the righteous.* And *Jacob* found the truth of this by experience, when he fled before *Esau*, and slept so sweetly upon a stone. But this tender and speciall presence and providence of Christ, respecting the outward man, is comprehended under the other, which respects the inward man, as *quid minus sub majory*, a lesse blessing under a greater. For if God be in a speciall manner present with my spirit, to guide and order that unto all Holy wayes, my spirit will command

my body to walk in them too: and so consequently Christ cannot chuse but be tenderly present with me also, for the 'good of that, whilst every member thereof is actuated by a spirit of his own ordering, to his own honour, as weapons of righteousness. And therefore doth Paul (pithily to speak much in few) silently pass over that, which is necessarily presupposed; praying that Christ would be with *Timothies* spirit, and then he was sure, Christ would be after a speciall manner present with his body too, for the good of that. *The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit.* That is, the Lord Jesus Christ exercise a speciall dominion in thy spirit, for the guiding and ordering of it, unto the avoyding of evil, and to the performing of all good, whereby Christ may have all the glory, due to hi: Name.

Now that thus to have Christ present with a mans spirit, is a prime and principall blessing: I will plainly demonstrate to you by a triple argument *ab effectu*.

Thus to have Christ present with our spirits, is the ready way to all temporall, spirituall, and eternall good: and therefore must needs be a prime and principall blessing.

Thus to have Christ present with a mans spirit, is the ready way unto all temporall good. Men whose spirits Christ doth after a speciall manner order, to avoid sinne, and to keep themselves pure, as Paul here useth the expression to *Timothy*, all temporall

good

good things, so far forth as may be good for them, belong unto them by promise : For godliness hath the promise of this life. It shall come to pass (saith the Lord) if you walk in my wayes, that I will bless you in the fruit of the womb, in the fruit of the field, in the basket, and store, &c. If you walk in my wayes I will do this, &c. Why they with whose spirits Christ is after a speciall manner present, this is their *high-way* (as Solomon said) to depart from evill : that is, this is their daily endeavour, to walk in all the wayes of the Lord ; & so consequently, all temporall good of right belongs unto them.

But you will say, how is it then, that those with whose spirits Christ is most present for his honour, have usually least of all temporall good things ?

To this the answer is easie and manifold. Men with whose spirits Christ is most present, to make them most tender to avoid sinne, and to keep themselves pure, these the devill doth most of all malign, and sers his limmes to *spoil them of their goods*, as the Author to the *Hebrews* saith, to keep them from that, which Christ would have them advanced to ; or else to strip them off that, which Christ hath conferred on them, by imprisonment, banishment and the like ; and so make such live in dens and holes, and caves of the earth ; to wander in Deserts and Wildernesses, wearing sheep skins, and goat skins,

skins, of whom the world is not worthy. Where a spirit of malice and confusion rules, 'tis no marvell to see servants set on Horseback and Princes go on foot.

Secondly, men with whose spirit Christ is after a speciall manner present, he takes speciall notice to what evill the spirit is most inclined, and so answerably gives of these outward things unto them. A wise Father hath his eye upon the disposition of his childe, and to what exorditancy he finds him inclined, he labours to prevent all occasions to it, and so keeps his childe short of what he could otherwise liberally allow him. And thus 'tis with our heavenly Father, respecting his children: he eyes strictly their spirits, and if he see them inclined to pride, covetousnesse, or any other scandalous vice, he shortens them in that, which may foment these. At these (I think) *James* may point, where he saith, *Let the rich rejoyce in that he is made low*, *Jam. 1. 10.* God out of tender love to his children; oftentimes makes them poor in purse, that they may become poor in spirit, and so capable of the Kingdom of heaven. Which rightly weighed, is not matter of sorrow, but matter of joy, as *James* saith.

Thirdly, those with whose spirits Christ is after a speciall manner present, to guide them to walk in his wayes, and to keep themselves pure; Christ doth prove them by poverty, as by other things: and hence it

may

may come to pass; that Christians very holy, may yet notwithstanding be very destitute of the things of this life: Thus you know the Lord dealt with *Job*. Christ was after a speciall manner present with his Spirit, to guide him to walk uprightly above many in his time. Now to make known this to the world, to his own glory, and *Jobs* eternall honour, he stript *Job* of all, and set him up on a dunghill, who before sat with the chiefest in seats of honour. God will have the world know, that those with whose spirit he is after a speciall manner present to guide and order them, are not as those with whose spirits the devill is in a speciall manner present, to guide and order: to wit, such as will winde and turn every way when put to it.

Lastly, those with whose spirits Christ is after a speciall manner present, they desire but little of the things of this life: and therefore 'tis no marvell, to see Christians very holy, yet not very wealthy. Christians with whose spirit Christ is after a speciall manner present, they only desire daily bread: *Agurs* portion, food convenient: and this the Lord gives them, and with this they are contented, which is the only weakly estate: Christians, with whose spirits Christ is after a speciall manner present, they hunger and thirst after righteousness, not after riches in the world: they covet the best gifts, the unsearchable

searchable riches of Christ, and not the fading riches of this life. Now Christ applies himself, to be most liberall in the distribution of that which the spirits of men most bend after, in mercy, or in justice. Christians whose spirits most strongly bend after grace: to these Christ in mercy doth most bountifully apply himself, to give grace: according to that of Christ, *Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled*, Christians whose spirits most strongly bend after worldly riches, to these oft times Christ in justice most liberally applies himself to give those, according to that of the Psalmist, *Whose belly thou fillest with thy hid treasure*. According likewise to that of Solomon, *There is a sore evill which I have seen under the Sun, namely, riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt*: Psal. 17. 11. Eccles. 5. 13. The objection being thus answered, the argument is still of force: That to have Christ with our spirits, is the way to all temporall good, and so consequently, a prime and principall blessing.

But that I may yet more fully speak of this argument, note that temporall good, either positive, or privative; (if I may for illustrations sake so distinguish.) Temporall good in a positive sense, is that secular thing which is in it self good; as bread, and cloth, and the like, of which we have already spoken.

Temporall good privatively so called, is affliction ordered to a mans good, which in self is not so. Now all those with whose spirits Christ is present, are partakers of this temporall good. All outward crosses tend to their inward gain, because Christ is with their spirits. For all outward troubles are heavier or lighter, more hurtfull or more profitable still to a man, as Christ is pleased to order his Spirit under them. A little outward trouble, if Christ let it seiz upon a mans spirit, he quickly sinks and dies under his burthen, according to that of the Apostle, *worldly sorrow causes death*. The loss of a wife or husband; nay, the loss of a child or friend; nay, the loss of the least outward content, if Christ stand aloof from mans spirit, and let it fasten upon him, he will soon languish, and bleed inwardly to death; whereas all outward afflictions, meeting together upon the outward man, if Christ be with the spirit, to support and bear up that, a Christian sweetly submits, and keeps on his way, according to that of the Apostle, *Rejoycing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing instant in prayer*: Rom. 12. Now Christ tenderly watches when outward troubles begin to take hold of that spirit, with whom he is specially present, and then he quickly relieves and eases it; and not onely so, but sanctifies it, to the drawing of such a spirit nearer to God in love.

love, according to that of David, Psal. 117, 2. *I love the Lord because he hath heard my voyce, and my supplication, because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live.* Adde this to the former that to have Christ with our spirits, is the ready way to all temporall good, whether positive or privative: and you must needs grant it to be a principall blessing.

Secondly, those with whose spirits Christ is specially present, are in the ready way to all spirituall good; and therefore thus to have Christ present with our spirits, must needs be counted a principall blessing, Christ is the author and worker of all grace: and therefore such spirits must needs be very gracious with whom Christ is: *The places are holily whereunto the Ark of the Lord hath come* saith Solomon, 2 Chron. 8. 11. I may truly say it of Christ, which the Ark typified. The spirits are holy with whom Christ is, and where holy Christ comes; They are at the well-head for holinesse, which have had Christ with their spirits:

They that have Christ with their spirits are in the ready way to very height of heavenly wisdom as Christ is. With him are all the treasures of wisdom. He that lies in thy bosome, teaching thee wisdom secretly, came out of the very bosome of the Almighty, and knows all things; he gives such an unction to that spirit with

teaches, that he makes it know and discern all things too.

They that have Christ with their spirits, are in the ready way to the very height of love, which is the glory of all graces, in the sight of God and man; for there is no such worker and winner of love, as Christ is. If he do but put in his finger by the hole of the ear, he will make a mans bowels melt after him. If he do but reveale his love to our spirits a little, our spirits grow sick of love unto him. He will wound us with one of his eyes, so full of beauty is hee: Let a mans spirit be never so cold; yet if Christ be with it, he is in the ready way to burn with love to Christ, as strong as death, which many waters cannot quench.

They that have Christ with their spirits, are in the ready way to the very height of joy and consolation: they are in the ready way to joy unspeakable and full of glory. *These things have I spoken unto you, &c.* said Christ to his Disciples. Christ speaks such things to the spirits of those with whom he is present, as fills their spirits with joy, to the very brim; and this oft times in the very depth of all outward extremity. The Church doth darkly hint this *The Comforter which should relieve my soul is farre from me*; Lam. 1. 16. As if the Church had said, though my outward misery be exceeding great, yet if the comforter did but keep close

close to my spirit, I should have as much consolation as my heart could hold, in the midst of all my misery : but this is my misery, that the Comforter which should relieve my soul is far from me, out of the hearing of sighs and groans : nay, out of the hearing of strong cries; *he is angry against my prayers.* In a word, a Christian which hath Christ with his spirit, is in the ready way to excell in vertue, as David sayes: to excell in all vertue; to be wiser then his teachers; more excellent in all grace then his neighbors. And therefore, to have Christ present with our spirits, must needs be counted and called, *prime and principall blessing.*

Lastly, to have Christ with our spirits, is the ready way unto eternall good; and therefore a principall blessing. As a flower carries with it, whatsoever light thing be fastened to it, unto its own center : so Christ whose proper place of residence is Heaven carries with him thither, all such spirits to whom he is united on earth. If we have a speciall friend at Court, we count that we are in a ready way to see all the pomp of the Prince. Christ hath the keyes of Heaven and Hell; he opens and no man shutteth; he shuts and no man can open: all with whose spirits he hath dwelt, and been kindly conversant upon earth, he knows; and when they shall knock at those everlasting gates, they will open and let them into every room.

his royall dwelling, and shew them all the
 story which he had with his Father before
 the world was. 'Tis between Christ and
 that spirit with whom he lives, as between
 Naomi and Ruth; where the one lives, the
 other will. Whilest such spirits live in the
 body, Christ will live with them there; when
 they remove out of the body, Christ will
 not leave them (*death cannot separate*) but
 commands his Angels to bring them to eter-
 nall mansions with himself. Christ which is
 lifted up to glory himself, will draw up all
 such unto him, as in whose spirits he dwels,
 and no strength shall be able to withstand
 him; none shall pluck such out of his hand.
Unio enim Christo, est unio inseparabilis.

If to have Christ with our spirits be a
 grand favour; not to have him with our spi-
 rits, must needs be a grand evill. A spirit
 without Christ is naked, as a body without
 heavenly clothes. Many things may make cloathing
 and defence for the body, but onely Christ
 is that best garment, as the Father of the Pro-
 phet calls him, can make cloathing and mu-
 nition for the soul. A mans spirit without
 Christ is as a naked body amongst Thorns;
 every Thorn pierceeth, and every Bryar
 reacheth, and fetcheth blood from such a
 body; so worldly cares and worldly fears,
 when strong, will pierce such a naked spirit
 thorow and thorow, and make him run
 as if God (unsought) do not seasonably
 step

step in and bridle the Bedlam. A mans spirit without Christ, is as a naked body amongst Serpents; every Serpent stings and venoms such a naked body to death; so every seed of the Serpent stings and poysons to death such naked souls, by their tharnings, flatteries, examples, and the like. A mans spirit without Christ, is as a naked body in great blasts of lightning; such bodies are suddenly scorcht and consumed; so such naked souls are suddenly blasted, by the fiery Darts of the Devill, and so suddenly oftentimes go from burning to burning; from burning in sin, to burning in Hell.

A mans spirit without Christ is not onely naked, but blind too. A naked man having his sight may make some shift; but a man naked and blind too, is in a miserable helpless state indeed: and just such is the state and condition of every mans spirit, that hath not Christ with it: for as the Sunne in the Heavens is the eye and light of the greater world; so the Sun of righteousness Christ, is the eye and light of the lesser world, man. Now do but imagine what a dark dolorous condition we should all be in, if the Sunne were darkned, or had utterly forsaken our Horizon; or do but think of that darkness which was upon the Egyptians for a long time, when no man could stir out of his place; and such and much worse is the dolorous condition of a spirit without Christ.

Christ, not able to see the least beam of saving light, not able to stir a step out of his place, in the way that leads to life.

A mans spirit without Christ is not onely blind, but dumbe too. A man. that is blind, yet if he can speak, can begge for that which he cannot see to work for. But when a man is blind, and dumb too; that he can neither help himself, nor beg of others; he is in a dolefull condition indeed; and just such is the condition of every mans spirit that hath not Christ with it. For as Christ is Eyes to the soul, so he is a Mouth and Tongue, enabling to cry *Abba Father*. Unlesse the spirit of Christ be with our spirits, helping our infirmities, who are godly, we are dumb, and not able to speak to our own Father, as adopted children for daily bread; much more unable to beg for life, to the dreadfull Judge of all the world, must all ungodly persons needs be, whose spirits are altogether without Christ as an helper. I would have all men that live in their sins, think seriously of this; when Christ as the dreadfull Judge of all the world at the great day shall ask you, what you have to say for your selves, that you should not eternally dye for your sins in which you have lived, you wil be like that man which was without his wedding garment, dumb and not able to say a word for your selves, because Christ is not
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with your spirits. 'Tis impossible that a mans own guilty spirit should be able to look the terrible Judge of men and devils in the face, much less speak a word for mercy, unless the Almighty Spirit of Christ be with it, to aid it. Many ignorant wretches sooth themselves with this, that they will at last cry, Lord, Lord, and so prevail quickly for pardon with him, who is infinite in mercy. Why, but think on this, O ignorant soul! *No man can call Jesus Lord, but by the holy Ghost.* Thou wilt not in thy greatest need be able to cry Lord, Lord, unless the Lord be with thy spirit. Death will sting thee, conscience will gnaw thee, Christ will condemn thee, Devils will tear thee; and yet wilt thou be able to cry, Lord, Lord, have mercy on me, unless the Lord be with thy spirit: but in stead of crying Lord, Lord, for mercy, thou wilt burn in malice against the Lord, and curse and blaspheme as Devils and damned wretches do. Hast thou never seen condemned wretches, not onely dumb but withall, desperate too; and leap off the ladder themselves, without either asking God or man forgiveness? Thus in a spiritual sense, and much worse, wilt thou do in the great day of judgement; for as much as Christ is not with thy spirit.

Fourthly, a mans spirit without Christ is not only blind and dumb, but deaf too. And if a man be blind and dumb, yet if he can hear

hear, he may make some shift to help himself: we follow a thing (we know) sometimes by the sound, when we cannot see it, nor speak what it is; but when a man is naked, blind, dumb, and deaf too, he is in a helplesse condition indeed; and just such is the state of a mans spirit without Christ. For Christ, as he is Eyes and Tongue, so he is Ears also to the soul of man. Hence it is that *John* speaks so frequently of spirituall hearing, after a *Hypotheticall* manner; *He that hath an ear, &c.* That is, if any man have spirituall discerning, Let him hear what the spirit saith to the Churches. Intimating that a spirituall ear is a very rare thing to be found, that which no man hath, but he which hath Christ with his spirit; that hath had his ears bored by the Spirit of Christ, as the Scripture speaks; all others are as deaf as Adders, and cannot hear the voyce of the charmer, charm he never so wisely. I would have all that live in their sins, seriously consider this too, as a further degree of unhappiness. You tell us that you will turn from your sins hereafter, and obey the call of God in the Ministry of his Word: but let me ask you this; Have you not hitherto turned the deaf ear upon God? Yes; Aye and so you will do for the time to come; and the reason of both, the same; because Christ is not with your spirits. Let mercies call, corrections call; let friends

call, father call, mother call, husband call, wife call; let Ministers call, conscience call, nay, let Christ himself call, in what voyce hee will, still voyce, or lowd voyce, in words never so pleasing, or never so piercing, yet wilt not thou hear, because Christ is not with thy spirit; but with Solomons fool, wilt on in thy sins, and be eternally punished.

Fifthly, a mans spirit without Christ is without feeling, in a dead palsie all over, which how dolorous such a state is in a corporall sense, you know; much more dolorous in a spirituell sense, I am sure. As the spirit of man can neither see, speak, nor hear, so neither can it feel, without the Spirit of Christ. The spirit of man without the Spirit of Christ, is dead. Christ is to our spirits, as our spirits are unto our bodies, their life: and life is the principle of feeling: for the dead feel nothing. *When Christ which is our [life] shall appear, &c.* Where there is no Christ, there is no life; and where there is no life, there is no feeling. You know the Apostle speaks of some that were *past feeling*, having given themselves over to lasciviousnesse, *work all uncleannesse with greedinesse*. There the Apostle speaks of such a senslesnesse, as lies upon the soul by a second act of divine justice. All humane spirits by the first act of divine justice upon Adam, are naturally past feeling, and would give up themselves unto all wickednesse with greedinesse, did not

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God restrain. To be past feeling in this latter sense, notes principally a want of divine affection, when sin doth not kindly affect the soul with sorrow; as in the former sense, when sin doth not at all affect the soul with sorrow: when holy wayes and works do not kindly affect the soul with joy, as in the other sense, when they do not affect the soul with joy at all, but rather disturb and provoke to passion and malice.

I would have all that live in their sinnes, seriously think on this also, as a further degree of unhappinesse. You have heard many powerfull Sermons, which you have seen work admirably upon others, and yet they have made no impression upon your spirits: and many hundred more may you hear, and no divine impression at last be made; and the reason of both, one and the same, because Christ is not with your spirits, and by reason of this, your hearts are as Adamants, which every stroke hardens, but not breaks it. Let the Master smite, and the man smite; let God smite. and his Minister smite, and conscience smite, nay, Let every member of the body be smitten with punishment, to affect the soul with sin, yet will it not stir and complain, unless Christ be with it.

Finally, a mans spirit without Christ, is without tasting or smelling: to these senses also (you know) the Scripture doth allude and therefore fitly here may I, to set forth

fully the unhappy condition of every spirit without Christ. You know the Apostle speaks of some, that *savoured not the things of God*; which is a term applyed in Scripture, to the sense of smelling as well as to the sense of tasting; and therefore for brevity sake do I here joyn both senses together in a spirituall way of allusion. Why all that have not Christ with their spirits, are such as cannot rightly *savour spirituall things*; such put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter.

I would have all you that live in your sins, seriously think on this too, as a further degree of unhappinesse. You come oft times to Wisdomes home, and though she prepare you all spirituall dainties, yet you can relish nothing but some by-things that lie about the dish rather for ornament then for food. And would you know the reason of this? tis because Christ is not with your spirits; If Christ were with you, you would feed on every dish at Wisdomes table; on promises, yea, and on threatnings too: *To the hungry soul, every bitter thing is sweet*, saith Solomon. All that is good and wholesome goes down well, where Christ is with the Spirit. You come frequently to Wisdomes house, who keeps a Table here, and twere for a King, and yet you have leag shriveled soules like men in a consumption: every one tels you, that you look as if you were starved, speak and live, as if you never heard a good Ser-

mon from yeers end, to yeers end: they tell you that you are so lean and feeble, that you need the benefit of all the spirits that every dish at Wisedoms Table can yeeld, to strengthen you, and recover you, and yet every dish almost goes against your stomacks; and that you doe eat, is without savour or any other vertue, and so you languish with all dainties before you, and thus you will go on languishing, untill you quite consume and perish eternally, unlesse Christ be with your spirits.

You see (I suppose) plainly by this time, that as it is a prime and principall happiness to have Christ with our Spirits; so it is a prime and principall evill and unhappinesse, not to have Christ with our spirits. Wherefore having laid open both before you, let me entreat you all to look in upon your spirits, and see who keeps company with them; Christ, or the devill; one of these two is with all our spirits. If Christ be not with our spirits, the devill is and will be. If Christ be with your spirits, according to the sense and meaning of the Apostle in my Text, you shall find it by these two things, *the body is dead because of sin; & the spirit is life because of righteousness.* 'Tis Pauls Character of Christs speciall presence in the soul of man upon earth, and therefore of strong authority. And if Christ be in you, *the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.* Rom. 8. 10. The body is dead because of sin

that is, the body of corruption is destroyed, as in respect of the guilt of it, so in respect of the dominion of it. And *the spirit is life, because of righteousness*: that is the regenerate part is vigorous, in reference to all righteous wayes.

And if therefore you would know whether Christ be with your spirits, see whether your bodies be dead because of sinne: Whether you labour to bring every thought into subjection to Christ; or whether you do not allow your selves liberty to some evill, out of love to some pleasure or profit; which is that principally, wherein the dominion of sin consisteth; as *Paul* hints unto us, where he saith, *The evill which I do, I allow not*. That is, I do not approve of it in my heart, nor plead for it with my tongue; but strive against it with all my strength; and it would be more joy to me to be rid of it, then if I had a Kingdom conferred to me. This is the language right, of one that hath Christ with his spirit.

Secondly, see whether your spirits be alive because of righteousness: if you would know whether Christ be with your spirits or not. See whether holy wayes do heartily affect you. I rejoyced when they said, Come let us go to the house of the Lord, saith the *Psalmist*. He spake like a man, having Christ indeed with his spirit: his spirit leapt within him, like the babe in *Elizabeths* womb, when they spake of drawing neer to God in the duties of his worship. A Christian

that hath Christ with his spirit, sees a taking transcendent beauty in all Wisedoms wayes; they are all wayes of pleasure, and paths of peace; which is spoken in reference to such as have Christ in their spirits: for others find no such thing in them. And his spirit opens in them like flowers in the Sun, and smells fragrantly, then bends and cleaves to them, in love to that souls sweetnesse, which he findes in them. And if you find these things in you, I think I may safely tell you to your comfort, that Christ is with your spirits.

I may turn this character into another form, as *Paul* doth, and tell you in his words that *he which is joyned to the Lord, is one spirit.* 1 Cor. 6. 17. They that have Christ with their spirits, are one spirit with Christ. This expreffion (I conceive) is something explained by these following words; *And the multitude of them that believed, were of one heart and one soul,* Acts 4. 32. or as the originall hath it, *ἡ καρδία καὶ ἡ ψυχὴ μία*, heart and soul one: They that have Christ with their spirits, are heart and soul one with Christ. They do *idem velle*, & *idem nolle*: What Christ loves, they love; and what Christ hates, they hate. Christ loves righteousness, and hates iniquity. *Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity,* &c. Psal. 45. 7. They that have Christ with their spirits, are heart and soul one with Christ in this, They love righteousness, that is, all righteous wayes:

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and hate iniquity, that is, all that Gods word condemns. 'Twas Christs meat and drink, to do his fathers will; they that have Christ with their spirits, are one spirit with Christ in this. 'Tis joy to the just to doe judgement, saith Solomon. Christ was tender about keeping the least Commandement, as well as about keeping the greatest. *Whosoever shall break one of the least Commandements, and teach men so, he shall be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven, Matth. 5. 19.* They that have Christ with their spirits, are heart and soul one with Christ in this; they are tender to keep all Gods commandements: least, as well as greatest; So shall I not be confounded, whilst I have respect unto all thy Commandements, saith David. I do not conceive the place fore-cited so, as if Christ did account of one part of his Fathers will above another: I rather think that he there speaks *Pharisaorum more*, in the Pharisees dialect, who would make the world believe, that they mightily laboured to keep some precepts, but others they thought, as many of us now do, that they need not be so strict about. Now Christs tender Spirit for his Fathers honour, could not brook this halting in Religion; and they that have Christ with their spirits, are heart and soul one with Christ in this. That Commandement which the most say is one of the least, and may be dispensed withall, or at least need not be so strictly look't unto; that, as well as any other,

ther, whil't a precious part of Christs will, a man that hath Christ with his spirit, will be tender to observe. *Dauids* spirit smote him, for cutting off the lap of *Sauls* garment, as well as for cutting off the life of *Uriah* : which plainly shews, that men which have Christ with their spirits, are tender about the avoiding of small sins, as well as great,

Now possibly some of you by what hath been said, may see that as yet you have not Christ with your spirits ; I shall addresse my self in the first place, particularly to speak to you, and then in the second place, I shall addresse my self, particularly to speak to such of you, as have by what hath been said, discerned that Christ is indeed with your spirits. To you which by what hath been said, see, that as yet Christ is not with your spirits, I have onely these two things to say, labour to bewaile your great want, as persons deeply sensible of it, and then labour to get this great want speedily supplied.

First, labour to bewaile your great want, as persons deeply affected with it. 'Tis the greatest want in the World, to want Christ to be with a mans spirit. Other wants may be afflicting wants, but this is a damning want. Other wants may make thee despised of men, but this want will make thee forever to be abhord of God. Thou wert better want riches, thou wert better want honours ; nay, thou wert better want bread

to put in thy head, then want Christ to be in thy heart. Thou wert better want thy dear Husband, thy sweet Wife, to lie in thy bosome, then want Christ to lie there. Nay, thy soul were better to be without thy body, then without Christ, If there be any want under heaven that makes a hell to a man upon earth, it is this : to want Christ to be with his spirit. For what is that makes hell, hell ? a place full of sin, and full of misery ? but this, that Christ is not with those spirits : they are spirits everlastingly excluded, from all communion with Christ. Now whereas great wants make you complain heavily, and mourn bitterly, begge the Lord to make these things sink into your spirits, that you may be sensible of this great want of wants, that your spirits are without Christ, and so without God in this world, that so all sorrow for other wants may meet and runne in one channell, to bewaile this great want. *Sauls* speech to his servant, I may here fitly allude to, *Come let us return* (said he) *lest my Father leave caring for the Asses, and take thought for us.* If you that mourn for this want and that want, did but feel the want of Christ with your spirits, you would with *Kish* quickly leave mourning for trifles and begin to mourn for things of weight : come, O my soul ! cease mourning for father and mother, cease mourning for husband and wife, for children and substance, and begin to mourn for this, that thou yet livest Christlesse.

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When you have got your hearts to bleed inwardly, under your great want, then cry mightily to the Lord, and supply it. And to make your prayers prevalent, urge the promise of God, wherein he hath engaged himself to do good in Christ, to them that are a far off. Thy soul thou findest far off from Christ: why, the promise (saith the Apostle) of Christ and salvation by him is to such. *For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all that are [a far off.]* This Peter spake by way of comfort, as now I do, to such as felt their spirits without Christ, without grace and hope of glory. Christ you see is under a generall promise, and therefore no soul should despair of obtaining him. He is promised to the Jewes, and not only to them, but to us Gentiles, who *sometimes were a farre off*; not to this Gentile or that, but to all that are prickt in heart for the want of him. *For the Promise is to you and to your children, and to all that are a far off.* Let every one therefore upon this ground, that feels his spirit prickt and wounded, for want of Christ, take words to himself, and go unto God; and say.

O God! my soul is a poor Christlesse soul. I find by wofull experience, that the Lord Jesus is not with my spirit, by reason of which I live wickedly to thy dishonour, and shall

shall I know not how soon, dye miserably, to mine own eternall undoing, if thou do not shew mercy upon me, according to thy promise. Thou hast said that thou wilt bestow Christ, grace and salvation, upon them that are a far off; make good thy gracious promise to me, whose spirit is far from Christ, grace and all good; so shalt thou oblige me for ever unto thee; and I shall tell of thy goodnesse as long as I live.

Having thus spoken what I thought fit, to such as find by what was formerly delivered, that Christ is not with their spirits: I shall in the next place speak unto you, that by what was formerly delivered, find that Christ is with your spirits. Something by way of counsel, & something by way of Consolation, I have to deliver unto you. Three things by way of counsel, I would commend unto you: *thankfully acknowledge this great favour; carefully preserve it; and industriously labour to augment it.*

First, thankfully acknowledge this great favour. 'Tis a pearl of great price, that God hath cast into thy bosom to give Christ to be with thy spirit: and for great favours, every one will acknowledge it very fit, and just, that they should be thankfull. 'Tis a jewel that Christ scarce gives to one of ten thousand: and for rare gifts, every one will readily confesse it to be great ingratitude, not thankfully to acknowledge them. Doest thou not hear some swear, some curse, some

live,

lye, like their father the devill? Why thou wouldest have been such a one, had not God given Christ to be with thy spirit. Dost thou not see some Drunkards, some whoremasters, some murderers, some persecutors of the Saints? why thou wouldest have been such a one, if God had not given Christ to be with thy spirit. Dost thou not see some make a God of their belly, some make a God of their wealth; some proud, some mad, some putting far from them the evill day, living as if they should never dye? Why, thou wouldest have been such a one, had not God given Christ to be with thy spirit. Dost thou not see some *Nabals*, some *Jezabels*, some *Cains*, some *Demases*, some *Judasas*? Why, amongst the number of these wouldest thou have been, had not God given Christ to be with thy spirit. Wherefore magnifie the Lord with all thy might, and let all that is within thee praise his holy Name. Think but how it was with thee, when thy spirit was without Christ. How foolish thou wast serving divers lusts: how the God of this world which rules mightily in the children of disobedience, did rule mightily in thee. How weak thy spirit was, and easily overcome and carried captive of every lust. How drunken thy spirit was, and reeld from one opinion to another: one day thou thoughtst thus and thus, and another day thou thoughtst quite contrary. I say, do but think of these things, and how the Lord might justly have left thee

thee still to have gone on thus, untill thou hadst perished, as he hath done many thousands, and then be unthankfull for the communion of Christ with thy spirit, if thou canst. It was this consideration that set *Paula* wondering at the goodnesse of the Lord. *I was a blasphemour, a persecuter &c. Yet I obtained mercy.* He circumflexes this term [*I*] yet [*I*] obtained mercy, &c. It was wonderfull in his eye, that God should give Christ to dwell with such a bloody blaspheming spirit as he had. In this way let us go to work, to raise our dull spirits, to magnifie the free goodnesse of the Lord: for 'tis a work of all works that God loves. *I was a man of a very proud, passionate, malicious, unclean spirit; and yet I obtained mercy.* God hath given Christ to be with this depraved spirit, and in a little time he hath done very much and made a manifest change in my spirit; of very proud, he hath made it in some measure humble; of very passionate, in some measure patient; of very malicious, in some measure loving; of very unclean, in some measure continent. O! the riches of his love; *how unsearchable is his mercy, and his love past finding out!*

Secondly, as I would have you thankfully acknowledge this great favour, so I would have you carefully labour to preserve it. You find that you have Christ with your spirits; take heed you do not lose him. Thou wert better lose thy life, then lose the special presence

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presence of Christ with this Spirit. 'Tis a prime and principall blessing, as thou hast heard, a blessing of more worth then this world; nay, of more worth than thy soul, which Christ values above the world. Now choyce things, we are usually very carefull of, and keep them choycely. Christ totally (I know) can no man lose, which hath him after a speciall manner present with his spirit; but according to some prime and principall operations, he may; according to others, very far, though not totally. A man may lose the presence of Christ with his spirit totally, as a Comforter. *The Comforter which should relieve my soul, is far from me, saith Jeremiah, Lam, 1. 16. in the person of the afflicted Church.* 'Tis probable enough, that *Dauids Spirit was thus stript of Christ by his dolorous complaints, which frequently we read of. Is his mercy clean gone for ever? hath his promise fail for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies? Will the Lord cast off for ever? &c will he be favourable no more? Psal. 77. 8, 9.* Some carriages in Christians towards Christ, make Christ totally alter his carriage towards them; though for his promise sake, he will never totally remove himself from them.

As when Christians do not keep their watch strictly against sin, in all the occasions of it; then Christ, instead of being a Comforter, becomes a convincer; and instead of
speaking

speaking sweet things, he speaks very bitter
unto the soul. This was the case of David
and Peter. Or when Christians are careless
and sluggish, to maintain and encrease their
sweet communion with Christ, unyeelding
to the sweet motions of the spirit of Christ, and
turning oft times the deaf ear against the
voyce behind them, which saith, *this is the
way, walk in it*; then Christ draws a curtain
between the spirit of man and himself, and
leaves the spirit of man in the dark, and full of
fears. This is notably illustrated by that lan-
guage of the Spouse, *It is the voyce of my Be-
loved that knocketh. saying; Open to me, my Si-
ster, my Love, my Dove, my undefiled: for my
head is filled with dew, and my locks with the
drops of the night.* The Church was convin-
ced of this, that it was her Beloved, seeking
nearer communion with her; and yet observe
how she replies; *I have put off my coat, how
shall I put it on? I have washed my feet, how
shall I defile them? I opened to my Beloved, but
my Beloved had withdrawn himself and was
gone; my soul failed when he spake; I sought
him, but I could not find him: I called him, but
he gave me no answer; Cant. 5.* You that find
the presence of Christ with your spirits, as a
comforter, make Christian use of what I have
said, that you may still enjoy so great a me-
cy. For if you lose the Lord Jesus Christ as a
comforter to your spirits, miserable comfort-
ers will all other things prove unto you. You

will

will mourn, and none will be able to comfort you, if Christ as a comforter forsake your spirits.

Secondly, as a leader; a man may very far lose the communion of Christ with his spirit, As if a Christian take liberty to sinne against that light, which Christ hath set up in his spirit; this will make Christ first or last (if not timely lookt unto) leave a man to his own understanding, to secure his course; and then will such a man declare himself quickly, to be a fool and a beast, in many points, as David saith. Have you not seen Christians of great light, erre in judgement, and erre in practice? Whence comes this weakness, but from hence, that Christ as a leader stands aloof from their spirits? which is a plain demonstration that a man may lose the presence of Christ with his spirit as a leader. David (I believe) found the truth of this, as well as of the former, by wofull experience. A man may collect so much cleerly from his own words. *Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy holy spirit from me.* Psal. 51. 11, The spirit of God is therefore called by David a holy spirit, because holy in himself (the spirit of the holy God, as he said to Daniel) but principally here, as I conceive, *Ab officio*: because the worker of holinesse in us. David doubtesse by his fall, found an exceeding weakness in his spirit unto all good, over what formerly he did, and strong propen-

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fly again to erre, as every act of sin, leaves
 seed & spawn upon the spirit : to bring forth
 more, to cover the first, or to commit the like
 again. But more than all this; he found
 Christ to stand a loof from his spirit; not ex-
 ercising that speciall dominion in his spirit, as
 before, for the subduing of lust, and suggesting
 of holy motions and desires; but leaving him
 as it were to himself, as one with whom he
 would have no more to do. And therefore
 doth *David* so dolefully complain, *Cast me not
 away from thy presence, and take not thy [holy]
 Spirit from me* : you therefore which find
 Christ with your spirits, as a tender leader, take
 heed of sinning against any part of that light,
 which he sets up in your understandings, or a-
 gainst any motions of his spirit, which he sug-
 gests unto you; least he leave you to your own
 light, and to your own strength : and then
 will you run from lesse sins to greater, from
 one sin to another, like *David* and *Peter*, to
 the scandalizing of the Gospell, and the despe-
 rate wounding of your own souls.

The third and last thing that I would
 commend unto you, by way of counsell, is
 this: labour to augment this great favour.
 You find Christ with your spirits, labour in-
 dustriously to have Christ more and more
 with your spirits. 'Tis a prime and princ-
 pall blessing, as you have heard, to have
 Christ with your spirits; therefore labour to
 get as much of this favour and happinesse as
 possible

possibly you can. Thou hast Christ with thy spirit as a teacher; why thou maist have him yet more intimate with thee, and open unto thee, in imparting divine mysteries, if thou follow on to know, as the Prophet speaks, if thou humbly forget, & look over all thou hast, and press hard after more: the things thou knowest not, Christ will teach thy spirit, morning by morning, as by the learned. Christ hath taught thy spirit many truths; why, he will lead thy spirit into all truth, if thou urge his promise to believe. He will fill thee with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom & spiritual understanding, if thou pray for it as Paul did for the Colossians. Thou findest Christ with thy spirit as a comforter; why thou maist have yet much more consolation from him, if thou study to be more obliable to him. Thou hast Christ distilling drops of consolation into thy spirit, now and then; why thou maist have Christ pouring in flagons of love into thy soul, filling thee with joy unspeakable and full of glory, if thou bring thy spirit to be more lowly and meek: for such find most rest to their souls: if thou carefully keep coming to Christ still in every pressure of spirit; for such find most ease: that is renewing faith still, as thou renewest thy sins.

Thou findest Christ with thy spirit as a quickner and strengthner to duty: why thou maist find him yet more mighty with thy spirit this way, if thou pour out thy spirit often with David for quickning grace;

grace; and if thou more deny thine own strength, and cast thy self more upon him. Could we but attain Paul's height in self-denial, to be nothing in our selves (though I know *nothing* saith he), we should find Christ gloriously present still with our spirits, and be more constant in zeal and strength to every good work, then we are. I conclude this thus; be so tractable to Christ, that thou mayest with *Mary*, win upon Christ still; and think that thou canst never be neer enough to him, nor intimate enough with him; and this is the ready way to have a heaven upon earth; for the more we get Christ to be with our spirits, the more truly may we be said to be in heaven.

The last thing that I have to say to you, that find Christ with your spirits, is matter of consolation. Here is comfort for you against famine. When thy body wants food, Christ that is with thy spirit, will give that meat to eat, which the world knows not of; so that when others repine, and curse God and their King in their extremity, as the Prophet speaks, thou shalt be patient in prayer to him who can command Ravens to bring thee bread and flesh to feed on; and will, rather then thou shalt starve, if thy life may be more to his glory, then thy death.

Here's comfort for you against the sword. In the midst of all troubles and feares, Christ that is with thy spirit will bear thee up admirably.

ly. What is the face of an enemy
if Christ be with thy spirit? What
of thy goods? nay, what is the
of thy body, if Christ be with thy
Mountain of misery, is but as a Mole-hill.
Christ support the spirit. To think of the
word is a naked defence to flesh and blood,
and so nothing is more terrible: but let us trust
the Lord think of it in reference to Christ
it is with our spirits, and then we shall not
troubled. though we hear of wars and ru-
mours of wars, no more than at the rumours of
any other calamity.

Here is comfort for you against the Plague,
which is here and there scattered in the king-
dome. What is any disease to the body, if
Christ be with thy soul? As the outward man
decayeth, the inward man shall be renewed
daily, because Christ is with thy spirit. When
thy body is full of pain, thy soul shall be full of
comfort, because Christ is with thy spirit.
When thy body is sealed with spots of death,
thy soul shall be sealed with the holy Ghost
unto eternall life, because Christ is with thy
spirit. The plague of the body is nothing, if
this plague of plagues be not upon the spirit, to
wit, destitute of Christ.

Here is comfort for you against persecution.
When men frown upon thee without, Christ
will smile upon thy spirit within: when men
beate the outward man with reproaches,
Christ will fill thy inward man with comforts:
when

Christ's communion with

Grace; and shut up thy body from the contrary
strength. Saints, Christ will give thy spirit
freedom of communion with himselfe
when men strike thy body, Christ will strengthen
thy soul: when men kill thy body, Christ will
save thy soul. In a word, as the afflictions
Christ abound in thy body, so the consolation
of Christ shall abound in thy soul, because
Christ is with thy spirit. Name any miserie
that is incident to man, and here's comfort.
be sucked out of this point, to oppose unto it.
Finally in life, in death, and eternally after
death, Christ that is with thy spirit will be
gain unto thee. Thy life he will make com-
fortable; thy death hopefull; thy being after
death eternally joyfull. Wherefore I will
conclude my Sermon for the good of you, as
Saint Paul doth his Epistle for the good of
Timothy, *The Lord Jesus Christ be with your
spirits.*

Tri-uni Deo gloria.

FINIS.

TL

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